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**FEDERAL WILDLAND  
FIRE MANAGEMENT**  
**POLICY & PROGRAM REVIEW**

**IMPLEMENTATION  
ACTION PLAN REPORT • MAY 23, 1996**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**



SD  
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1996

*Instruction memorandum  
WD 96-2016  
Attachment 1*



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Office of Fire and Aviation  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1120 (FA-106)

July 26, 1996

Instruction Memorandum No. 96-2016  
Expires: 9/30/97

To: AD's and All Field Officials

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review - Implementation Action Plan

The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (Policy Review) report was accepted by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture in December 1995 and distributed to field offices in February 1996. In their acceptance memo, the Secretaries directed bureau heads to develop an implementation strategy supporting the recommendations of the Policy Review. The attached

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# **Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review Implementation Action Plan Report**

**May 23, 1996**

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

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the Bureau of Land Management's Office of Fire and Aviation  
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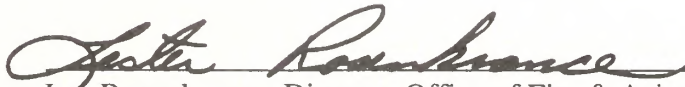
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# Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Implementation Action Plan Report

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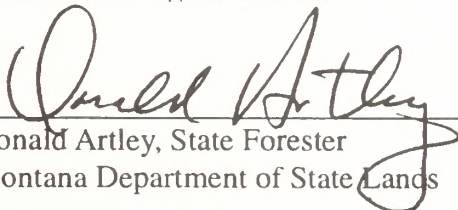
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Wildland Fire Policy Review (Policy Review) directly affects only Department of Agriculture and Interior agencies. However, it significantly, although indirectly, affects local, State, and Tribal governments as well as other Federal partners. Every effort has been and will be made to consider both the direct and indirect effects of Policy Review implementation .

The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council (Leadership Council) established an Action Plan Development Team, which provided a report of the requirements outlined in the Implementation Strategy. The Leadership Council conducted independent reviews of the Action Plan Development Team's report to refine recommendations based on review by internal staff, the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council, and Federal Geographical Area Coordinating Group representatives. These reviews culminated in a finalized draft Action Plan Report.

In addition to the March 1996 Leadership Council meeting, the first national interagency meeting of Regional/State/Area-level fire program management personnel from all the Federal wildland management agencies was held. At this meeting, the group began an employee education process, initiated an implementation strategy, validated findings of the draft Action Plan, and began to develop ownership of the Policy Review at this level of the organizations.

Action items were organized as follows:

- ◆ *Action items to be implemented immediately at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group level.* These action items were reviewed by Federal fire program management personnel in a Federal interagency, intergeographical mix, resulting in draft implementation strategies. It was noted that there may be action items Federal agencies could implement but which may adversely affect State agencies due to legal or budgetary constraints. Whether all the identified action items are immediately implementable will not be known until the Federal representatives meet with their Geographic Area Coordinating Group partners to finalize the implementation plans.
- ◆ *Action items that will require a long-term commitment.* There are several action items that can be partially implemented, but further work is required for complete implementation; others will require long-term agency commitment in terms of funding and FTE. The approaches range from having two or three specialists involved to assigning larger task groups to do further analysis and develop actions. A few action items are dependent on others being completed.
- ◆ *Action items that relate to the Interagency Management Review Team.* Several action items are closely related to items that are being completed under the Interagency Management Review Team effort. These and related Interagency Management Review Team actions have been identified in the section titled "Fire Policy Action Items that Relate to the Interagency Management Review Team."

Agency Administrator and Geographic Area Coordinating Group involvement is essential for successful Policy Review implementation. Agency Administrators must be involved in the development of implementation strategies and plans in order to provide reality checks and develop ownership.

They are also responsible for institutionalizing the Policy Review's action items into agency operations; they must make it happen. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups must be involved in order to ensure that plan development and implementation is a coordinated effort and there is mutual understanding and ownership among all partners.



## MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT TEAM IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTION

The following implementation actions apply only to Department of Agriculture and Interior agencies and are based on input from the Action Plan Development Team, the Leadership Council review/discussions, and outputs from the national Federal interagency fire meeting involving the Regional/State Office/Area-level fire personnel who will be responsible for implementation. However, implementation must be accomplished through coordinated partnerships with affected stakeholders.

### Action Items to be Implemented Immediately at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Level

The Management Oversight Team directs Federal agencies to work with their Tribal and State partners in the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups to develop a coordinated interagency implementation plan for addressing those action items identified at the National Interagency Fire Center March 27-28, 1996. The following considerations should be made:

- ◆ Responsibility for completion should be assigned to the Regional/State Office/Area Office-level Agency Administrators. In order to have Director and Agency Administrator involvement, strong consideration should be given to assigning Agency Administrators specific responsibility for action-item implementation.
- ◆ Due date for completion of the Geographic Area Coordinating Group implementation plans is 12/30/96. Action items already in process or ongoing should continue, and implementation of others will begin upon adoption of the plans.

### Action Items that Will Require a Long-Term Commitment

The Management Oversight Team will issue agency direction to the Leadership Council to establish teams to begin work on the action items identified.

The Management Oversight Team will issue agency direction to the Leadership Council to establish a plan for completing the Interagency Management Review Team report and the related Fire Policy action items.

### Other Actions for the Management Oversight Team

- ◆ Establish requirements for tracking action items and getting feedback.
  - The Management Oversight Team, using the Leadership Council as staff, is responsible for monitoring.
- ◆ Brief Directorate and Regional/State/Area Office-level Agency Administrators.
  - All direction will be formal within each agency to ensure Agency Administrators at all levels are aware of work to be performed and to illustrate agency commitment to implementation.
- ◆ Direct that appropriate agency manuals be revised.





## **SUMMARY OF ITEMS BY IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORY**

- 1. ACTION ITEMS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY AT  
THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA COORDINATING GROUP LEVEL**
- 2. ACTION ITEMS THAT WILL REQUIRE A LONG-TERM  
COMMITMENT**
- 3. ACTION ITEMS THAT RELATE TO THE  
INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM**



## ACTION ITEMS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY AT THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA COORDINATING GROUP LEVEL

A partnership at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group level will be the most effective method of implementing the Policy Review. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups are comprised of Federal and State agency representatives from the fire programs of those agencies. The geographic areas follow, for the most part, the regional breakdown for USDA Forest Service regions and cover the lower 48 States and Alaska. These areas were established as logical breakdowns of fire suppression workload and all agencies' lands are included. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups were established to foster cooperation, ensure efficiency, and solve mutual problems. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups have the unique ability to address landscape fire management issues and coordinate those issues throughout the fire management community.

The Federal Geographic Area Coordinating Group representatives met at the National Interagency Fire Center on March 27-28, 1996, to review the action items and identify those that are implementable now within existing budgets and staffing levels. The Federal representatives from each Geographic Area Coordinating Group developed a draft implementation strategy plan for those action items they felt could be implemented. All implementation strategies developed by the Federal Geographic Area Coordinating Group representatives are considered draft because State cooperators were not present to provide input. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups were very pointed about the fact that they could not produce a final product without the involvement of their State partners. This is within the intent and spirit of the Secretaries' memorandum and the Guiding Principles of the Policy Review. Two other observations that evolved out of this meeting and the work produced:

- ◆ Implementation strategies will require further time for development in order to get cooperator input and ownership.
- ◆ There may be action items which the Federal agencies could implement, but State agencies may be constrained by legal or budgetary limitations.

The Federal representatives of the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should present the draft implementation strategies to their home group, with all members participating in the development of a local plan that meets their needs. It should be recognized that the best plan is one where informed consent is conferred by all partners. *The italics material in the following action items provides further clarification or explanation for each individual action item.*

### Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Implementation

#### **Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management**

- 02 develop Fire Management Plans for all areas subject to wildland fires. These plans will: use information about fire regimes, current conditions, and land management objectives as a basis to develop fire management goals and objectives; address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include a full range of fire management actions; use new knowledge and monitoring results to revise fire management goals, objectives, and actions; and be linked closely to land and resource management plans. *Individual field units are responsible for*



*Fire Management Plan development. They must involve their fire management partners and the public. Private lands may not have land or resource management plans for Federal agencies to link to, and another method of documentation or linkage may need to be devised. See page(s) 32.*

- 03 develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. See page(s) 11, 31.*
- 08 conduct a collaborative fire research program to improve the predictive understanding of wildland fire and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics and to strengthen the technological capabilities and organizational framework necessary to sustain the role of fire in natural ecosystems. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. Conducting that research program is the responsibility of USDA Forest Service Research units, National Biological Service, etc. Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to evaluate ongoing management activities. See page(s) 31.*

## **Use of Wildland Fire**

- 13 require appropriate treatment of fuel hazards created by resource-management and land-use activities. *This action item applies primarily to Federal lands. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups have no authority to require fuel treatments on private lands. Some States have hazard reduction laws, but enforcement lies appropriately with the State agencies.*
- 14 conduct all prescribed fire projects consistent with land and resource management plans, public health considerations, and approved prescribed burn plans.
- 15 implement the National Wildfire Coordinating Group interagency prescribed fire qualification and certification standards.
- 18 conduct research and development on fuel treatment alternatives and techniques. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. Conducting that research program is the responsibility of USDA Forest Service Research units, National Biological Service, etc. Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to evaluate ongoing management activities. See page(s) 31.*
- 23 jointly develop an assessment process for determining the probability of success and/or failure associated with the use of prescribed fire and evaluating potential positive and negative consequences. As a part of this process, the effects of not conducting the project will also be evaluated. *Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to*



*evaluate ongoing management activities. The development of such a program must involve local partners. See page(s) 28.*

- 24 jointly develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires. *Field units should work cooperatively with their partners to develop a risk assessment process that meets their local needs. The development of such a program must involve local partners. See page(s) 28.*
- 25 create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned prescribed fire program. *Everyone's responsibility. See page(s) 28.*

## **Preparedness and Suppression**

- 28 develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups work with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Working Team to identify and develop the tools. See page(s) 18, 19.*
- 29 through training, job details, or other methods, increase experience and fire qualifications of agency administrators and fire management personnel.
- 31 establish partnerships with contractors, cooperators such as rural and volunteer fire departments, and others, which encourage and assist them to adopt and implement Federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc. *The proper partnership instrument to be used depends on the specific relationship (i.e., contract: purchaser-user or purchaser-donor; cooperative agreement: financial supporter and participant partner; grant: financial supporter-patron; memorandum of understanding: partner or recipient).*
- 34 develop interagency preparedness planning based on established interagency wildland fire management objectives. *See page(s) 32.*
- 35 develop interagency strategies to implement preparedness plans. These strategies must consider both initial attack and extended attack capability and should include the full range of available cooperator and contractor resources. *See pages(s) 32.*
- 37 work together and with other affected cooperators, groups, and individuals to develop and implement fire prevention plans to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire. *See page(s) 32.*
- 38 provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations. *See page(s) 13.*
- 40 base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited. *This is the new Federal protection policy and may be different from the protection policy of State and local government protection agencies. Individual Geographic Area Coordinating Groups must address these differences as they develop their individual implementation plans. See page(s) 13, 29.*



- 42 examine and identify, on an interagency basis, employee availability at each organizational level, based on fire qualifications and other necessary skills, to provide needed suppression and support. This will include planning for both initial attack and extended attack at the local level. *See page(s) 28.*
- 43 develop and utilize, to the maximum extent possible, the concept of closest initial attack forces and interagency staffing for wildland fire suppression and support, optimizing the use of the Federal and non-Federal work force. Qualified contractors are a component to be considered in suppression and support planning.
- 45 develop interagency severity plans to provide increased fire suppression capability in emergency situations, including accessing additional resources, pre-positioning resources, and training emergency firefighters. *See page(s) 30, 32.*

### **Wildland/Urban Interface Protection**

- 49 lead by example in utilizing fire-safe standards at Federal facilities.
- 50 ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements; renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with Federal policy and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. Agreements will address all partners in these areas. *See page(s) 27.*
- 51 incorporate wildland/urban interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans. *See page(s) 27.*
- 54 educate agency personnel on Federal cost-share and grant programs, Fire Protection Agreements, and other related Federal programs so the full array of assistance available to States and local agencies is understood. *See page(s) 28.*
- 55 participate in the development and execution of a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard mapping scoping study in cooperation with Tribal, State, and local governments and the private sector. *Field units will be asked and should be involved in this study. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group and U.S. Fire Administration will coordinate the study as part of action item 83. See page(s) 27.*
- 56 increase communication with wildland/urban interface property owners, planners, elected officials, and others through education and awareness messages about the role of fire in wildland ecosystem health, inherent risks in wildland/urban interface areas, available prevention/protection measures, and Federal disaster assistance programs. *Field units will be asked and should be involved in this effort. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group and Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team and the U.S. Fire Administration will coordinate educational efforts. See page(s) 29.*
- 58 support and participate in public education efforts in cooperation with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (IIPLR) and fire and building code organizations. *See page(s) 29.*
- 59 utilize the recently rechartered National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire



Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association, to focus on wildland/urban interface fire protection issues and actions. *The National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program referred to is correctly titled the NWCG National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Advisory Group. This group has been tasked in the Implementation Action Plan Report with several action items (see pages 14 and 17). Therefore, the above action could be considered as fully or at least partially implemented. See page(s) 27.*

- 60 utilize the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated national approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the wildland/urban interface. *The National Association of State Foresters has accepted the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the action items in the Western Governors' Association report. See page(s) 27.*

### **Coordinated Program Management**

- 63 establish job performance standards for agency administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities. *Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19.*
- 64 provide consistent and adequate training for agency administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management. *Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19, 28.*
- 65 ensure that agency administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction. *Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19.*
- 66 ensure that trained and certified employees participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire program as needed; and administrators are responsible, accountable, and make employees available.
- 73 early in the process, involve public health and environmental regulators in developing the most workable application of policies and regulations. *Federal, State, Tribal, and local public health, air quality, and environmental quality regulators should be involved in all planning efforts either as partners, consultants, or interested parties. See page(s) 32.*
- 81 cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem. *See page(s) 15, 27, 30.*

### **Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Partial Implementation**

Within existing budgets and policies, agencies may be able to implement part or most of the following action items, but additional work may need to be done for total implementation. These items are also listed as action items that will require a long-term commitment for total implementation.



## Use of Wildland Fire

- 11 jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should integrate the planning of an expanded program. Individual agencies will work to address issues through the agency process. See page(s) 16, 32.*
- 12 facilitate the planning and implementation of landscape-scale prescribed burns across agency boundaries. Seek opportunities to enter into partnerships with Tribal, State, and private land managers to achieve this objective where appropriate. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups begin to plan for and strengthen their partnerships in order to conduct landscape-scale prescribed burns. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 32.*
- 17 jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should coordinate implementation of National Wildfire Coordinating Group National Incident Business Management Working Team recommendations. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 16, 28.*
- 20 seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire. *Agencies within Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should be aware of administrative changes and work within current agency policy to facilitate prescribed fire funding. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups can facilitate the multi-agency coordination effort. See page(s) 16, 29.*
- 26 reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint. *Utilize Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Prescribed Fire Team guidance when completed. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should coordinate and facilitate prescribed burn planning and execution. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 16, 29.*

## Wildland/Urban Interface

- 47 adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should utilize National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group guidance to adopt an operational role that meets their special circumstances. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 17, 27, 28.*
- 48 identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands. *Geographic Area Coordinating Groups are responsible for identifying and prioritizing these areas. See page(s) 17, 27.*



## ACTION ITEMS THAT WILL REQUIRE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

The action items listed cannot be implemented without commitment of resources to perform work. Timeframes range from two to several years of work and in some cases, all work has and will be ongoing in nature such as research and planning activities. In each of these directions, it is the intent of the Management Oversight Team that Agency Administrators and other program managers be involved in order to provide input and a reality check.

### Summary by Topic Area of Action Items For Implementation

#### **Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management Preparedness and Suppression Coordinated Program Management**

INSTRUCT THE FEDERAL FIRE AND AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL'S FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING TEAM TO REVIEW FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING, STANDARD CRITERIA TO ASSESS OVERALL SUPPRESSION AND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARD INTERAGENCY PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND STAFFING AND TO DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS. TEAM TO REPORT TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 9/30/96.

- 01 use a compatible fire management planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management; this system will ensure adequate fire suppression capabilities and support fire reintroduction efforts.
- 33 develop long-range interagency wildland fire management objectives, based on values to be protected, across geographic and agency boundaries.
- 41 use standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements. *See page(s) 18.*
- 46 develop a standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing process.
- 68 jointly develop a standard methodology for measuring and reporting fire management efficiency that includes commodity, non-commodity, and social values. This methodology should specifically address, among other considerations, the costs and benefits of large-fire suppression. *See page(s) 31.*

#### **Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management Coordinated Program Management**

INSTRUCT THE FEDERAL FIRE AND AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL'S FIRE SCIENCE TEAM TO DEVELOP A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DUE TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 3/30/97

- 03 develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management. *See page(s) 6, 31.*

- 71 jointly identify the legal context for reintroducing fire into wildlands and develop options for accomplishment. Options may include modifying regulations to address ecological processes where appropriate; exercising broader interpretations of policy; or resolving obstacles at regional and local levels, including those on non-Federal lands. Based on this interpretation, develop standardized agreements or new agreements that permit these activities. *See page(s) 29.*

## **Use of Wildland Fire and Coordinated Program Management**

INSTRUCT THE FEDERAL FIRE AND AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL'S PRESCRIBED FIRE TEAM TO DEVELOP A LONG-TERM WORK FORCE STRATEGY. THIS TEAM TO REPORT TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 12/30/96.

- 16 train and maintain a qualified and adequate work force to plan and implement interagency prescribed fire projects safely and effectively, and make these personnel available when needed. *See page(s) 28, 32.*
- 67 jointly manage fire use and suppression resources and activities to achieve accomplishment of both programs concurrently. *See page(s) 30, 32.*

## **Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management**

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S PRESCRIBED FIRE AND FIRE EFFECTS WORKING TEAM TO TAKE THE LEAD AND COORDINATE WITH THE PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP AN EDUCATION STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THESE ACTION ITEMS. THIS TEAM TO REPORT TO THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP BY 5/1/97.

- 09 establish an interdisciplinary team that includes all agencies, regulators, and other partners to design a consistent fire-role and -use message for decision makers and the public. This message will: describe and clearly explain issues such as ecosystem condition, risks, consequences (including public health impacts), and costs in open dialogue with internal and external constituents and be designed to maximize open communications and reduce polarization among conflicting interests regarding the use of fire. *See page(s) 29.*
- 10 build on existing interagency efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. As part of this effort, agencies will develop and widely transmit a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion; integrate this message into existing agency communication systems, agency and partner initiatives (such as forest health, ecosystem management, etc.), and all external outreach efforts, including television, magazines, newspapers, and public meetings; encourage, create, and coordinate partnerships to achieve consistency in messages, build public trust, and obtain public opinion; and develop mandatory national and regional interagency training programs to instill in all employees an understanding of the role of fire in natural systems. *See page(s) 29.*

## **Use of Wildland Fire**

INSTRUCT THE FEDERAL FIRE AND AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL'S PRESCRIBED FIRE TEAM TO CONDUCT A TECHNICAL REVIEW OF HAZARD PAY ISSUE AND GIVE TO GARY WILSON (USFS PERSONNEL) FOR TRANSMITTAL TO OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT BY 9/30/96.



- 21 work with the Office of Personnel Management to acquire authority for hazard pay to compensate employees exposed to hazards while engaged in prescribed burning activities. *See page(s) 28, 29.*

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S NATIONAL INCIDENT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO INCLUDE PRESCRIBED FIRE POSITIONS UNDER SPECIAL FIREFIGHTING RETIREMENT. INCLUDE PRESCRIBED FIRE SECONDARY/ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS. RESOLUTION BY 12/30/96.

- 22 clarify that prescribed fire positions qualify for primary coverage under special firefighter retirement and issue appropriate guidance to field offices. *See page(s) 28, 29.*

INSTRUCT TOM PATTEN (USFS WO F&AM) TO WORK WITH JIM DOUGLAS (DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR) TO DEVELOP LEGISLATION WITH SIMILAR LANGUAGE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. DOUGLAS TO GUIDE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR LEGISLATION PROPOSAL THROUGH SECRETARY'S OFFICE. DOI LEGISLATION PROPOSAL DUE 8/30/96.

- 26a Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek legislation providing for prompt reimbursement to private landowners for damages resulting from escaped prescribed fires.

## **Preparedness and Suppression**

INSTRUCT HARRY CROFT (USFS WO F&AM) TO DEVELOP A POSITION PAPER REGARDING BUDGET LANGUAGE TO COMPARE WITH DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR LANGUAGE BY 9/30/96.

- 36 develop consistent language to be included in budget appropriations, enabling the full spectrum of fire management actions on wildland fires. *See page(s) 30.*

INSTRUCT JOHN ROBERTS (USFS-NARTC) TO ESTABLISH INTERAGENCY TEAM TO DEVELOP PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. PROPOSAL DUE TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 12/30/96.

- 32 define values to be protected, working in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal governments; permittees; and public users. Criteria will include environmental, commodity, social, economic, political, public health, and other values.
- 38 provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations. *See page(s) 7.*
- 39 protect property and natural/cultural resources secondary to firefighter and public safety. *See page(s) 29.*
- 40 base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited. *See page(s) 7, 29.*

## **Wildland/Urban Interface Protection**

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S INCIDENT OPERATIONS STANDARDS WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP A REPORT IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND TRAINING NEEDED BY 3/30/97.



- 52a identify specialized skills and training that are needed by both wildland and structural fire agencies in the interface and incorporate those requirements into the Wildland Fire Qualification System to provide for safe and efficient operations in the wildland/urban interface.

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S TRAINING WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP THE CURRICULA AS OUTLINED IN THE ACTION ITEM BY 9/30/98.

- 52b develop operational curricula, in cooperation with the National Fire Academy, for protection in the wildland/urban interface.

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S TRAINING WORKING TEAM TO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION ON A CONTINUING BASIS.

- 52c implement training through interagency systems and joint training activities, and augment fire training not available at the State and local levels.

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S FIRE EQUIPMENT WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP A REPORT THAT IDENTIFIES EQUIPMENT STANDARDS BY 9/30/97 AND MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION.

- 52d identify and implement equipment standards for wildland/urban interface operation.

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE ADVISORY GROUP TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS. NWCG TO ESTABLISH TIMEFRAMES FOR COMPLETION.

- 53 increase emphasis on cost-share program assistance in the wildland/urban interface through the Forest Service State and Private Cooperative Fire Program, including training and equipping of State and local agencies. Assess and revise, as needed, other mechanisms to ensure funding is directed to agencies with wildland/urban interface responsibilities. *See page(s) 30.*
- 57 expand programs, curricula, and distribution systems for wildland/urban interface educational materials in cooperation with structural protection agencies. *See page(s) 29.*
- 61 work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans and performance-based partnerships. *See page(s) 27.*

## **Coordinated Program Management**

INSTRUCT JIM DOUGLAS (DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR) TO COORDINATE REQUEST TO THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL AND SOLICITOR'S OFFICE. REQUEST TO BE COMPLETED BY 7/30/96.

- 72 clarify and differentiate between agency liability and personal liability resulting from prescribed fire, based on legal review and interpretation of tort law. *See page(s) 28, 29.*

INSTRUCT AGENCY DIRECTORS TO CONSULT THEIR LEGAL COUNSEL WITH RESPECT TO CURRENT LEGAL AUTHORITIES FOR FIRE MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS MECHANISMS TO AVOID TORT LIABILITY.

- 74 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other

appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address current authority under Federal laws such as the Organic Act, National Forest Management Act, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. *See page(s) 29.*

- 75 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address the subjects of tort liability, budget authorities, cooperative agreements, mitigation activities, and natural resource protection/environmental laws. *See page(s) 29.*

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S NATIONAL FIRE WEATHER ADVISORY GROUP TO DEVELOP AN EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES BASED ON REPORT FROM GEOGRAPHIC AREA COORDINATING GROUP TO NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP BY 12/30/96.

- 76 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products necessary to support total wildland fire management program needs. *See page(s) 27.*
- 77 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will evaluate alternative methods, including non-Federal sources, to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs. *See page(s) 27.*
- 78 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek commitment from the Secretary of Commerce to research and develop technology to provide accurate, long-range weather forecasts. *See page(s) 27.*

INSTRUCT THE INTERAGENCY FIRE STATISTICS GROUP TO DEVELOP A STATUS REPORT DUE TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 3/03/97.

- 79 standardize fire statistics and develop an easily accessible common database. *See page(s) 30.*

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT WORKING TEAM TO DEVELOP A SCHEDULE AND TIMETABLES FOR ACTION ITEM IMPLEMENTATION AND SUBMIT TO NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP.

- 80 jointly identify, develop, and use tools needed for ecosystem-based fire management programs with mechanisms to integrate fire-related databases with other systems. These tools will include the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes, historical fire patterns, response to management actions, and others; consistent methods to track and access fire-use statistics and administrative costs; and mechanisms to transfer and exchange fire management systems information. *See page(s) 30.*
- 81 cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem. *See page(s) 9, 27, 30.*



REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE ADVISORY GROUP AND U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION TO DEVELOP ANNUAL STATUS REPORTS FOR NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP AT SPRING MEETING EACH YEAR.

- 82 take a lead role in the adoption of the National Fire Incident Reporting System standards for all fire agencies that operate in the wildland/urban interface and modify existing reports to reflect wildland/urban interface fire protection data. *See page(s) 30.*
- 83 complete a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard scoping and mapping study in partnership with the Western Governors' Association; Tribal, State, and local governments; and the private sector. *See page(s) 27.*

### **Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Partial Implementation** **(Additional Action Required to Fully Implement)**

#### **Use of Wildland Fire**

INSTRUCT JIM TURNER (USFS WO FISCAL) AND WALLY JOSEPHSON (DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR) TO DEVELOP A POSITION PAPER BASED ON CURRENT DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR POSITION AND DRAFT CROFT POSITION PAPER TO ANALYZE ALTERNATIVES. DUE TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 3/30/97.

- 11 jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems. *See page(s) 10, 32.*

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S INCIDENT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT WORKING TEAM PROPOSE CONSISTENT, SIMPLE CONTRACTING AND HIRING PROCEDURES FOR PRESCRIBED FIRE ACTIVITIES. DUE TO NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP BY 9/30/96.

- 17 jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. *See page(s) 10, 28.*

INSTRUCT JIM DOUGLAS (DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR) TO VERIFY IF STILL A PROBLEM AND IF SO, RECOMMEND RESOLUTION. DUE TO THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL BY 8/30/96.

- 20 seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire. *See page(s) 10, 29.*

INSTRUCT THE FEDERAL FIRE AND AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL'S PRESCRIBED FIRE TEAM TO DRAFT UNIFORM, AGENCY SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT BY 6/30/96.

- 26 reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint. *See page(s) 10, 29.*

#### **Wildland/Urban Interface**

REQUEST THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE ADVISORY GROUP TO PROVIDE A REPORT THAT OUTLINES THE STEPS, ALONG WITH BUDGETARY NEEDS, THAT

SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT ACTION ITEMS. THIS WILL INCLUDE A SAMPLE COMPREHENSIVE MOU/COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT THAT MAY BE USED TO FACILITATE EFFORTS IN THE INTERFACE. DUE TO NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP BY 3/30/97.

- 47 adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. *See page(s) 10, 27, 28.*
- 48 identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands. *See page(s) 10, 27.*

### **Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Future Implementation** **Pending Completion of Prerequisite Action Items**

Work on the following action items will be delayed. These items are not considered low priority but are dependent upon other action items having some level of work done or being implemented. It is proposed that the action items be reconsidered in the timeframes identified to determine whether or not work can logically begin.

### ***Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered in April 1997***

#### **Role of Fire in Resource Management**

- 04 create a system for coordination and cooperation among land managers and regulators that explores options within existing laws to allow for the use of fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health while at the same time protecting individual components of the environment, human health, and safety. This system will allow for early collaboration during the process of developing new land management plans and provide a mechanism for incorporating input as existing plans are implemented or revised. It will encourage land managers and regulators to enter into agreements that set forth the actions each will take before and during the time fire is reintroduced in their area of responsibility. *See page(s) 29, 32.*
- 05 continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple-scale, interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries; effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations; and ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions. *See page(s) 32.*
- 06 expedite the decision-making process by jointly developing criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards. This process will identify those ecosystems where fire does not need to be reintroduced (fire is not a significant natural component or the fire



regime has not been altered); where fire is unlikely to succeed (fire would be adverse, such as areas significantly altered by fuel accumulations and species changes) – determine appropriate, ecologically sound alternatives for these areas; and where treatment with fire is essential or potentially effective (fire is needed to improve resource conditions or reduce risk and hazard). *See page(s) 32.*

- 07 jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire; address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the appropriate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences; use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity; and illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas. *See page(s) 32.*

## **Use of Wildland Fire**

- 19 seek authority to eliminate internal barriers to the transfer and use of funds for prescribed fire on non-Federal lands and among Federal agencies. *See page(s) 29.*

### ***Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered Based on The Leadership Council Proposal for Action Items 27, 28 & 62***

## **Preparedness and Suppression**

- 30 enforce a system of accountability to manage a safe and efficient fire management program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements should include items specifically related to safety and will recognize and reward success and provide disciplinary action for failure.

## **Coordinated Program Management**

### ***Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered Pending Outcome of Action Item 41 - To Be Reviewed April 1998***

- 69 develop criteria to be used in evaluating alternative fire management organizations. Some examples of criteria include meeting land management objectives, reintroducing fire in the ecosystem, ensuring cost effectiveness, effectively dealing with wildland/urban interface fire protection, and using partnerships and cooperative relationships. *See page(s) 31.*
- 70 use these criteria to analyze, with cooperators, a broad range of organizational alternatives on a national, regional, and local basis. Examples of alternatives include a single Federal fire organization; contracts with States, private sector, Tribal governments, military, or combinations thereof; and status quo. *See page(s) 31.*

## ACTION ITEMS THAT RELATE TO THE INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM

Several action items from the Fire Policy Review and Interagency Management Review Team are very closely related. The following actions are recommended which will complete these actions.

### Preparedness and Suppression

THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS WILL BE COMBINED WITH INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM ACTION ITEM 3.6 AND BE HANDLED AS PART OF INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM COMPLETION:

- 27 establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future Agency Administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program. *See page(s) 18.*
- 28 develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program. *See page(s) 7, 18.*
- 62 develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers. *See page(s) 18.*
- 63 establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities. *See page(s) 9.*
- 64 provide consistent and adequate training for Agency Administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management. *See page(s) 9, 28.*
- 65 ensure that Agency Administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction. *See page(s) 9.*

ACTION ITEM 44 WILL INCLUDE INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM ACTION 3.7. FINAL PROPOSAL DUE 7/30/96.

- 44 use an analysis and decision-making process that considers, on an interagency basis, existing and potential fire severity; suppression resource commitment and availability; prescribed fire activity; environmental, social, and political concerns; and other pertinent factors. *See page(s) 30, 32.*







# APPENDIX I

## Implementation Strategy Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to implement the direction contained in the Final Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, dated December 18, 1995. Implementation will address those specific items highlighted by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior in their December 20, 1995, decision Memorandum.

In response, the strategy establishes a process to ensure that implementation will:

- ◆ Be consistent with the nine Guiding Principles in the Final Policy report.
- ◆ Occur on a joint, interagency basis whenever possible to ensure the consistent application of policy.
- ◆ Involve a broad spectrum of program areas, including resource managers, Agency Administrators, scientists, and planners, as well as wildland fire management staffs.
- ◆ Address local, interagency, integrated planning as a critical means of ensuring that on-the-ground implementation is as effective as possible.
- ◆ Coordinate with other Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Weather Service, and Department of Defense.
- ◆ Ensure the participation of Tribal, State, and local partners.
- ◆ Recognize the results of the wildland-urban interface project sponsored by the Western Governors' Association.

The Policy Review represents an evolutionary stage in the development of wildland fire policies. Priority will be placed on educating and informing employees about the philosophies and policies put forth in the Review and on examining how quickly and efficiently we can review and update land management plans to ensure their conformance with (or incorporate) wildland fire considerations included in the Review.

Successful implementation within the five Federal land management agencies will require:

- ◆ major involvement and commitment by Agency Administrators from all levels in all implementation phases.
- ◆ commitment by Agency Administrators from all levels to ensure employees are aware of these policies, implementation actions, and implementation decisions.
- ◆ the Federal Fire community to externalize beyond its traditional borders.

## B. Leadership

A *Management Oversight Team* will guide implementation of the strategy and ensure that progress is made toward effecting the change articulated in the Policy Review. This Team will include membership as follows:

BIA - Terry Virden - Acting Director of Trust Responsibilities  
BLM - Les Rosenkrance - Director, Fire & Aviation  
FWS - Carolyn Bohan - Deputy Asst. Director, Refuges and Wildlife  
NASF - Don Artley, Montana State Forester  
NBS - Dennis Fenn - Deputy Director  
NPS - Maureen Finnerty - Associate Director, Park Operations and Education  
USFS - Joan Comanor, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

The Team will utilize the *Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council* for staff and implementation support:

Al Dunton, Associate Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, Bureau of Land Management, Boise, Idaho.  
Roger Erb, Chief, Fire Management Branch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boise, Idaho.  
Rick Gale, Deputy Chief Ranger, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.  
Steve Haglund, Chief, Branch of Fire Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Boise, Idaho.  
Dr. Mary Jo Lavin, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

## C. Roles and Responsibilities

The *Management Oversight Team* will:

- ◆ Approve an Implementation Strategy.
- ◆ Oversee the completion of the Implementation Action Plan with particular attention to:
  - ensuring interagency and interdisciplinary participation.
  - ensuring the availability of personnel within their agencies to participate in action planning and implementation teams.
  - ensuring appropriate involvement by “other” Federal and non-Federal agencies, cooperators, partners, and Tribes.
  - ensuring Action Plan tasks are completed by assigned target dates.
- ◆ Provide periodic progress reports to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture.

The *Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council* will:

- ◆ Provide advice on process or technical matters to the Management Oversight Team to ensure successful implementation of Policy Review recommendations.
- ◆ Oversee completion of staff work to support the Management Oversight Team.
- ◆ Provide guidance and appropriate logistical support to implementation work teams to ensure their success.



- ◆ Recommend formation of *Task Groups* and group memberships.
- ◆ Track implementation progress.

#### D. Process

An *Action Plan Development Team* was established to ensure an interagency, interdisciplinary approach to implementing the policies, goals, and action items in the Final Policy Report. This team came together only for the purpose of developing a report that outlines a process and strategy for implementing the goals and actions contained in the Policy Review report. The team ceased to function upon completion of this specific task. The team included Agency Administrators, fire program managers, field-level Fire Management Officers, resource technical specialists, and fire ecologists.

Membership included:

BIA - Eric LaPointe, Superintendent, Blackfoot Reservation  
 BIA - Edwin Lewis, Forester, Yakima Reservation  
 BLM - Carl Gossard, State Fire Management Officer, Colorado  
 BLM - Mike Green, District Manager, Burns, Oregon  
 FWS - Bill Leenhouts, Service Fire Ecologist  
 Intertribal Timber Council - Don Motanic  
 NPS - Scott Erikson, Deputy Superintendent, Santa Monica Mtns. National Recreation Area  
 NPS - Meg Weesner, Resource Management Specialist, Saguaro National Park  
 USFS - Jerry Williams, Assistant Director, Fire Operations  
 USFS - Jim Lawrence, Deputy Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region

The team met the week of 2/26 - 3/1/96 and provided the *Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council* with a report that provided recommendations on how to best organize for implementation of the goals, actions, and other recommendations contained in the Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review report. In developing their product, the team analyzed the 83 action items contained in the Policy report. The Team operated within the following parameters:

- ◆ Do not solve issues, but provide recommendations on how to plan/organize/staff for issue resolution.
- ◆ Implementation is not only a fire community concern; it requires the involvement of other disciplines, other agencies, and other organizations.
- ◆ Consider real-world constraints such as human and fiscal resources.
- ◆ Remember that NWCG is not a panacea; it may be an effective organization/process for long-term issues, but its internal organizational process is not well suited to short-term solutions.

The team provided a report that outlined a process for meeting the Secretaries' expectations as outlined in Section I, Purpose, including:

- ◆ A process for implementing goals/actions and resolving issues.
- ◆ Grouping of similar goals or action items needing a common solution.



- ◆ Who should be involved (internal/external, skills/expertise, leadership, non-Federal representation)?
- ◆ Who should be tasked to lead Topic Area Task Groups (person, skill, type of expertise, affiliation)?
- ◆ Membership on Topic Area Task Groups (by name, expertise, affiliation).
- ◆ Broad timelines for each Topic Area Task Group.
- ◆ Relative priorities for implementation within each of the five Wildland Fire Policy Review topic areas.
- ◆ Other ongoing reviews or projects where interface is needed to ensure compatibility, minimize duplication of effort, and maximize efficiency.
- ◆ Priorities for action, keeping in mind that a long-term project may have much more ultimate payoff than a series of relatively easy fixes.
- ◆ A process for monitoring Policy Review implementation and ensuring accountability for action and follow-up.

The Action Plan identifies those issues that, by virtue of governing legal mandates, agencies must accomplish independently of one another. In these situations, the Action Plan outlines the means to coordinate actions among various agencies at the field level.

In addition, this Action Plan:

- ◆ Continues to build, in the involvement process, on the key focuses of the Interagency Management Review Team:
  - Creating a passion for safety.
  - Emphasizing the importance of Agency Administrator duties and responsibilities.
  - Monitoring performance and accountability.
  - Expanding interagency fire management.
- ◆ Determines who the other Federal and non-Federal agencies are (for all revised statements).
- ◆ Utilizes existing fire organizations and groups as a means of involving others, and determine if membership/representation is available to all.
- ◆ Utilizes natural resource organizations and groups as a means of involving others such as the National Association of State Foresters, Society for Range Management, Society of American Foresters, Intertribal Timber Council, and Intertribal Agriculture Council.
- ◆ Utilizes the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups as primary levels for involving all players in specific locales. Ensure all groups are invited as participants.
- ◆ Utilizes individual agency organizations as a focal point to reach out to partners and cooperators.

Successful implementation will depend upon input and screening of issues by the Federal land managing agencies and bureaus before work or Task Group assignments are given and when the Task Groups have completed a draft product, prior to submission of a final report to the Leadership Council. These steps will ensure that a Task Group is directed to look at those areas each agency has identified as a process, procedure, legal, budget, or other barrier to implementing the goals or action items articulated in the Policy Review report and that solutions to a problem are directed toward the right areas in individual agencies. This will also ensure agency commitment to both the implementation process and identified solutions.

#### E. Immediate Implementation Activities

There are three actions that can begin immediately. Two of these were mandated by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. The third becomes the cornerstone for all future implementation action. Specific implementation action will be developed no later than 4/15/96.

- Immediately begin to involve and inform employees about the philosophy, principles, and policies contained in the report to stress the intent of the Policy Review that fire is a tool for land and resource management objectives. Agency Administrators should take the lead in this effort.
- The review of existing land and resource management plans can begin in order to ensure that wildland fire considerations are incorporated therein, both to use fire to achieve land/resource management objectives and to ensure that land/resource management objectives consider the impacts of fire exclusion.
- A review of laws, regulations, and policy can begin – in that order – to ensure they are not in conflict with the intent of the Fire Policy Review. Where legal constraints prohibit the implementation of recommendations, a strategy will be developed to determine any corrective legislation/regulation necessary. Where policy constraints impede the implementation of recommendations, a strategy will be developed to determine needed changes in policy on an interagency basis insofar as possible.

Agency Administrators will implement the revised policy on protection priorities, which are: (1) human life and (2) property and natural/cultural resources. Once people have been committed to an incident, they become the highest value to be protected.

#### F. Other Issues, Concerns, and Considerations

##### Interagency Management Review Team - South Canyon Fire

There are several issues from the Interagency Management Review Team that may be overlapping or are on the periphery of action items identified in the Policy Review. These should be noted to avoid duplication of work. There are several issues from the Interagency Management Review Team that have not been brought to closure and which may impact work under the implementation phase of the Policy Review. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council is responsible for these items and should review them to determine future plans for completion or inclusion in this effort. A final report is required.

##### Director and Agency Administrator Involvement

A major concern as expressed in various levels and groups is the “externalization” of Wildland Fire Policy Review goals and action items. The fire community finds itself talking with itself



about issues that are beyond their control and require external groups to take the lead role in implementation or to make time available to illustrate priority of various action items. The focus usually comes back to Directorate levels and Agency Administrators. Within each agency this group must lead the way in order to demonstrate the seriousness of these efforts.

G. Federal Wildland Fire Policy Implementation Schedule

02/06/96	Establish Action Plan Task Group.
02/21/96	Management Oversight Team Review Strategic Plan.
02/26/96	Leadership Council meet with Action Plan Task Group and Policy Review Team Leaders.
03/01/96	Draft Action Plan Completed.
03/04/96	Draft Action Plan Delivered to Management Oversight Team.
03/11/96	Management Oversight Team comments on Draft Action Plan to Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council.
03/15/96	Conference call among Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council to finalize Draft Action Plan.
03/16/96	Leadership Council delivers Draft Action Plan to Management Oversight Team for approval.
03/19/96	Management Oversight Team approves Final Draft Action Plan via conference call.
03/26-27/96	Interagency Fire Management Officers' meeting for input to Draft Action Plan.
04/15/96	Draft Action Plan Completed.
04/24/96	Draft Action Plan discussed by Management Oversight Team.
05/03/96	Agency comments due to Draft Action Plan.
05/10/96	Final Draft Action Plan prepared and distributed.
05/20/96	Management Oversight Team Action Plan approval/implementation order.



## APPENDIX II

### Action Items, Subject-Matter Experts, External Contacts, and Ongoing Initiatives by Subject Area

The Action Plan Development Team identified several subject areas that crossed Topic Areas. For each of those subject areas, subject-matter experts and external key contacts were identified. Ongoing initiatives were also identified. This information should be used where developing implementation strategies and implementing specific action items.

#### 1. Subject Area: Wildland Urban Interface

**Action Items:** 47, 48, 50, 51, 55, 59, 60, 61, 81, 83

##### **Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

NWCG WUI Advisory Group  
Full Regional Governors' Representative  
Western Governors' Association,  
Southern Governors' Association Representatives  
National Fire Protection Association  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction  
National Association of State Foresters

##### **Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

Western Governors' Association  
National Wildfire Coordinating Group  
Orange, California, and Summit, Colorado, Counties

##### **Background:**

Interagency Management Review Team 3.15  
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#### 2. Subject Area: Weather

**Action Items:** 76, 77, 78

##### **Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

National Weather Service  
Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce

##### **Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

Interagency Management Review Team 3.2

**3. Subject Area: Risk Assessment**

**Action Items:** 23, 24, 25

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Agency Administrators/Science/Fire Management  
Western Governors' Association

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

USFS Ongoing Risk Assessment Efforts (See Jerry Williams)

**4. Subject Area: Business Management Practices**

**Action Items:** 17, 21, 22,

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

NWCG Incident Business Management Working Group  
Interagency Administration Team  
Bill Bradshaw  
Office of Personnel Management

**5. Subject Area: Staffing, Training and Certification**

**Action Items:** 16, 42, 47, 54, 64, 72

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

NWCG Training Working Team  
Contract Training Specialists

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

NWCG Training Working Team  
Interagency Management Review Team 3.41, 3.42, 3.43

**6. Subject Area: Education**

**Action Items:** 09, 10, 56, 57, 58

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Education Initiative Group  
NWCG Prevention, Education & Communications Working Team  
NWCG Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team  
Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)  
Western Governors' Association  
Southern Governors' Association  
National Advertising Council  
National Association of State Foresters

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

IFCC Curriculum Initiative  
Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)

**7. Subject Area: Legal**

**Action Items:** 04, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 39, 40, 71, 72, 74, 75

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Agency Administrators  
Fire Program Managers  
Legislative Affairs  
Solicitor's Office  
Office of General Counsel  
Western Governors' Association  
Department of Justice

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

Western Governors' Association



**8. Subject Area: Coordinated Systems/Data Management**

**Action Items:** 79, 80, 81, 82

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

- Fire Program Managers
- Agency Administrators
- Information Resources Management Systems
- Western Governors' Association
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

- NWCG Information Resources Management Working Team
- Shared Applications Computer System
- Northern Great Plains Ecosystem Initiative
- Rockwell existing contracts
- President's Northwest Forest Plan
- Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR) Emissions Tracking Systems
- National Biological Service National Biological Information Infrastructure

**9. Subject Area: Budget**

**Action Items:** 36, 44, 45, 53, 67

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

- Fiscal Specialists
- Agency Administrators
- Fire Program Management
- Office of Management and Budget
- Appropriations Subcommittees

**10. Subject Area: Research, Science, and Technology Transfer**

**Action Items:** 03, 08, 18, 68

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Research Working Team  
Forest Service Forest Fire and Atmospheric Research  
Universities  
National Biological Service  
Forest Service Research  
Nature Conservancy  
Western Timber Association  
Tall Timbers Research Station  
Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team Tech Transfer Work Group  
Forest Service Tech Transfer Specialists

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Research Working Team  
Forest Service Forest Fire and Atmospheric Research  
Forest Service Fire Economics Project  
Phil Omi - Colorado State University (3 Interior Fire Coordination Committee-Funded Projects)

**11. Subject Area: Organizational Alternatives**

**Action Items:** 69, 70

**Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Agency Fire Directors - develop contract specifications for an external consultant  
Congressional delegation  
State Foresters  
Partnership Councils

**Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

National Workforce Assessment Task Force  
Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management Fire Organization, Oregon/Washington  
National Performance Review



## 12. Subject Area: Planning

### **Action Items:**

Integrated Resource Management Plans: 04, 05, 06, 11, 12, 16, 73

Fire Management Plans: 02, 07, 67

Operational: Preparedness: 34, 35

Severity: 44, 45

Prevention: 37

### **Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:**

Multidisciplinary, including managers

Planners

Fire managers

Resource specialists

Scientist

Regulatory agencies

External databases for public involvement

### **Existing Ongoing Initiatives:**

Council on Environmental Quality

National Performance Review

Interagency Management Review Team 3.12

### APPENDIX III

#### NUMERICAL SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS (AI's)

AI#	<p><i>This numerical listing of all action items contained in the Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review Report is provided for convenience in locating them throughout this document.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action Item</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action Plan Reference Page</b></p>
	<b>Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management</b>	
01	use a compatible fire management planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management; this system will ensure adequate fire suppression capabilities and support fire reintroduction efforts.	11
02	develop Fire Management Plans for all areas subject to wildland fires. These plans will use information about fire regimes, current conditions, and land management objectives as a basis to develop fire management goals and objectives; address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include a full range of fire management actions; use new knowledge and monitoring results to revise fire management goals, objectives, and actions; and be linked closely to land and resource management plans.	5, 32
03	develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management.	6, 11, 31
04	create a system for coordination and cooperation among land managers and regulators that explores options within existing laws to allow for the use of fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health while at the same time protecting individual components of the environment, human health, and safety. This system will allow for early collaboration during the process of developing new land management plans and provide a mechanism for incorporating input as existing plans are implemented or revised; and encourage land managers and regulators to enter into agreements that set forth the actions each will take before and during the time fire is reintroduced in their area of responsibility.	17, 29, 32
05	continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple scale, interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries; effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations; and ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions.	17, 32
06	expedite the decision-making process by jointly developing criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards. This process will identify those ecosystems where fire does not need to be reintroduced (fire is not a significant natural component, or the fire regime has not been altered); where fire is unlikely to succeed (fire would be adverse, such as areas significantly altered by fuel accumulations and species changes) - determine appropriate, ecologically sound alternatives for these areas; and where treatment with fire is essential or potentially effective (fire is needed to improve resource conditions or reduce risk and hazard).	17, 32



07	jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire; address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the appropriate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences; use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity; and illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas.	18, 32
08	conduct a collaborative fire research program to improve the predictive understanding of wildland fire and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics and to strengthen the technological capabilities and organizational framework necessary to sustain the role of fire in natural ecosystems.	6, 31
09	establish an interdisciplinary team that includes all agencies, regulators, and other partners to design a consistent fire-role and -use message for decision makers and the public. This message will describe and clearly explain issues such as ecosystem condition, risks, consequences (including public health impacts), and costs in open dialogue with internal and external constituents and be designed to maximize open communications and reduce polarization among conflicting interests regarding the use of fire.	12, 29
10	build on existing interagency efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. As part of this effort, agencies will develop and widely transmit a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion; integrate this message into existing agency communication systems, agency and partner initiatives (such as forest health, ecosystem management, etc.), and all external outreach efforts, including television, magazines, newspapers, and public meetings; encourage, create, and coordinate partnerships to achieve consistency in messages, build public trust, and obtain public opinion; and develop mandatory national and regional inter-agency training programs to instill in all employees an understanding of the role of fire in natural systems.	12, 29
<b>Use of Wildland Fire</b>		
11	jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems.	10, 16 32
12	facilitate the planning and implementation of landscape-scale prescribed burns across agency boundaries. Seek opportunities to enter into partnerships with Tribal, State and private land managers to achieve this objective where appropriate.	10, 32
13	require appropriate treatment of fuel hazards created by resource-management and land-use activities.	6
14	conduct all prescribed fire projects consistent with land and resource management plans, public health considerations, and approved prescribed burn plans.	6

15	implement the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) interagency prescribed fire qualification and certification standards.	6
16	train and maintain a qualified and adequate work force to plan and implement inter-agency prescribed fire projects safely and effectively, and make these personnel available when needed.	12, 28, 32
17	jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities.	10, 16, 28
18	conduct research and development on fuel treatment alternatives and techniques.	6, 31
19	seek authority to eliminate internal barriers to the transfer and use of funds for prescribed fire on non-Federal lands and among Federal agencies.	18, 29
20	seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire.	10, 16, 29
21	work with the Office of Personnel Management to acquire authority for hazard pay to compensate employees exposed to hazards while engaged in prescribed burning activities.	13, 28, 29
22	clarify that prescribed fire positions qualify for primary coverage under special firefighter retirement, and issue appropriate guidance to field offices.	13, 28, 29
23	jointly develop an assessment process for determining the probability of success and/or failure associated with the use of prescribed fire and evaluating potential positive and negative consequences. As a part of this process, the effects of not conducting the project will also be evaluated.	6, 28
24	jointly develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires.	7, 28
25	create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned prescribed fire program.	7, 28
26	reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint.	10, 16, 29
26a	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek legislation providing for prompt reimbursement to private landowners for damages resulting from escaped prescribed fires originating on Federal lands.	13
<b>Preparedness and Suppression</b>		
27	establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program.	18, 19
28	develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program.	7, 18, 19



29	through training, job details, or other methods, increase experience and fire qualifications of agency administrators and fire management personnel.	7
30	enforce a system of accountability to manage a safe and efficient fire management program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements should include items specifically related to safety and will recognize and reward success and provide disciplinary action for failure.	18
31	establish partnerships with contractors; cooperators, such as rural and volunteer fire departments; and others, which encourage and assist them to adopt and implement Federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc.	7
32	define values to be protected, working in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal governments; permittees; and public users. Criteria will include environmental, commodity, social, economic, political, public health, and other values.	13
33	develop long-range interagency wildland fire management objectives, based on values to be protected, across geographic and agency boundaries.	11
34	develop interagency preparedness planning based on established interagency wildland fire management objectives.	7, 32
35	develop interagency strategies to implement preparedness plans. These strategies must consider both initial attack and extended attack capability and should include the full range of available cooperator and contractor resources.	7, 32
36	develop consistent language to be included in budget appropriations, enabling the full spectrum of fire management actions on wildland fires.	13, 30
37	work together and with other affected cooperators, groups, and individuals to develop and implement fire prevention plans to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire.	7, 32
38	provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations.	7, 13
39	protect property and natural/cultural resources secondary to firefighter and public safety.	13, 29
40	base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited.	7, 13, 29
41	use standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements.	11, 18
42	examine and identify, on an interagency basis, employee availability at each organizational level, based on fire qualifications and other necessary skills to provide needed suppression and support. This will include planning for both initial attack and extended attack at the local level.	8, 28

43	develop and utilize, to the maximum extent possible, the concept of closest initial attack forces and interagency staffing for wildland fire suppression and support, optimizing the use of the Federal and non-Federal work force. Qualified contractors are a component to be considered in suppression and support planning.	8
44	use an analysis and decision making process that considers, on an interagency basis, existing and potential fire severity; suppression resource commitment and availability; prescribed fire activity; environmental, social, and political concerns; and other pertinent factors.	19, 30, 32
45	develop interagency severity plans to provide increased fire suppression capability in emergency situations, including accessing additional resources, pre-positioning resources, and training emergency firefighters.	8, 30, 32
46	develop a standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing process.	11
<b>Wildland/Urban Interface Protection</b>		
47	adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland fire-fighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance.	10, 17, 27, 28
48	identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands.	10, 17, 27
49	lead by example in utilizing fire-safe standards at Federal facilities.	8
50	ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements; renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with Federal policy and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. Agreements will address all partners in these areas.	8, 27
51	incorporate wildland/urban interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans.	8, 27
52	charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and establishing a data-collection mechanism, in coordination with Tribal, State, and local governments, insurance industry, National Fire Protection Association, and others, to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem.	
52a	charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying specialized skills and training that are needed by both wildland and structural fire agencies in the interface and incorporating those requirements into the Wildland Fire Qualification System to provide for safe and efficient operations in the wildland/urban interface.	14
52b	charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with developing operational curricula, in cooperation with the National Fire Academy, for protection in the wildland/urban interface.	14



52c	charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with implementing training through interagency systems and joint training activities and augmenting fire training not available at the State and local levels.	14
52d	charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and implementing equipment standards for wildland/urban interface operation.	14
53	increase emphasis on cost-share program assistance in the wildland/urban interface through the Forest Service State and Private Cooperative Fire Program, including training and equipping of State and local agencies. Assess and revise, as needed, other mechanisms to ensure funding is directed to agencies with wildland/urban interface responsibilities.	14, 30
54	educate agency personnel on Federal cost-share and grant programs, Fire Protection Agreements, and other related Federal programs so the full array of assistance available to States and local agencies is understood.	8, 28
55	participate in the development and execution of a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard mapping scoping study in cooperation with Tribal, State, and local governments and the private sector.	8, 27
56	increase communication with wildland/urban interface property owners, planners, elected officials, and others through education and awareness messages about the role of fire in wildland ecosystem health, inherent risks in wildland/urban interface areas, available prevention/protection measures, and Federal disaster assistance programs.	8, 29
57	expand programs, curricula, and distribution systems for wildland/urban interface educational materials in cooperation with structural protection agencies.	14, 29
58	support and participate in public education efforts in cooperation with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (IIPLR) and fire and building code organizations.	8, 29
59	utilize the recently rechartered National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association, to focus on wildland/urban interface fire protection issues and actions.	8, 27
60	utilize the Western Governors' Association (WGA) as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated national approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the wildland/urban interface.	9, 27
61	work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans and performance-based partnerships.	14, 27
<b>Coordinated Program Management</b>		
62	develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers.	18, 19

63	establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities.	9, 19
64	provide consistent and adequate training for Agency Administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management.	9, 19 28
65	ensure that Agency Administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction.	9, 19
66	ensure that trained and certified employees participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire program as needed; and administrators are responsible, accountable, and make employees available.	9
67	jointly manage fire use and suppression resources and activities to achieve accomplishment of both programs concurrently.	12, 30, 32
68	jointly develop a standard methodology for measuring and reporting fire management efficiency that includes commodity, non-commodity, and social values. This methodology should specifically address, among other considerations, the costs and benefits of large-fire suppression.	11, 31
69	develop criteria to be used in evaluating alternative fire management organizations. Some examples of criteria include: meeting land management objectives, reintroducing fire in the ecosystem, ensuring cost effectiveness, effectively dealing with wildland urban interface fire protection, and using partnerships and cooperative relationships.	18, 31
70	use these criteria to analyze, with cooperators, a broad range of organizational alternatives on a national, regional, and local basis. Examples of alternatives include a single Federal fire organization; contracts with States, private sector, Tribal governments, military, or combinations thereof; and status quo.	18, 31
71	jointly identify the legal context for reintroducing fire into wildlands and develop options for accomplishment. Options may include modifying regulations to address ecological processes where appropriate; exercising broader interpretations of policy; or resolving obstacles at regional and local levels, including those on non-Federal lands. Based on this interpretation, develop standardized agreements or new agreements that permit these activities.	12, 29
72	clarify and differentiate between agency liability and personal liability resulting from prescribed fire, based on legal review and interpretation of tort law.	14, 28, 29
73	early in the process, involve public health and environmental regulators in developing the most workable application of policies and regulations.	9, 32



74	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address current authority under Federal laws such as the Organic Act, National Forest Management Act, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.	14, 29
75	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address the subjects of tort liability, budget authorities, cooperative agreements, mitigation activities, and natural resource protection/ environmental laws.	15, 29
76	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products necessary to support total wildland fire management program needs.	15, 27
77	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will evaluate alternative methods, including non-Federal sources, to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs.	15, 27
78	The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek commitment from the Secretary of Commerce to research and develop technology to provide accurate, long-range weather forecasts.	15, 27
79	standardize fire statistics and develop an easily accessible common database.	15, 30
80	jointly identify, develop, and use tools needed for ecosystem-based fire management programs with mechanisms to integrate fire-related databases with other systems. These tools will include the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes, historical fire patterns, response to management actions, and others; consistent methods to track and access fire-use statistics and administrative costs; and mechanisms to transfer and exchange fire management systems information.	15, 30
81	cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem.	9, 15, 27, 30
82	take a lead role in the adoption of the National Fire Incident Reporting System standards for all fire agencies that operate in the wildland/urban interface and modify existing reports to reflect wildland/urban interface fire protection data.	16, 30
83	complete a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard scoping and mapping study in partnership with the Western Governors' Association; Tribal, State, and local governments; and the private sector.	16, 27



Attachment 2

IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNICATION PACKAGE  
(37 pages)



## WHAT IS THE URGENCY?

Over the past century, land-use practices and our good efforts to suppress all fires have slowly but surely changed the face of the landscape. Dead vegetation has accumulated unnaturally in many places, and we are now faced with the reality of larger, more severe wildland fires. Not only are these intense wildland fires dangerous and difficult to control, but they are generally much more harmful to the resources than the low-intensity fires Mother Nature intended as a housekeeping tool.

The increasing challenge of protecting wildland/urban interface areas needs immediate attention. This is not a new problem, and we've been struggling for many years to find a solution. Federal agencies cannot solve this problem alone, but they can work with state and local organizations, communities, and homeowners to help close the growing gap between the problem and the solution.

### KEY POINTS OF THE REPORT

► Reconfirms that public and firefighter safety is the top priority.

► Adjusts protection priorities from a strict 1 - human life, 2 - property, and 3 - resource values to 1 - human life and 2 - property and natural/cultural resources, based on relative values to be protected.

► Creates a framework for allowing fire to function, as nearly as possible, in its natural ecological role and for using fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health.

► Places heavy emphasis on partnerships within the Federal fire management agencies; with State, Tribal, and local governments; and with the private sector.

► Directs agencies to jointly develop programs to expand the use of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems.

► Requires that fire management goals and objectives be set forth in land and resource management plans.

► Requires that every area subject to wildland fires be covered by a Fire Management Plan that is responsive to land and resource management plan objectives.

► Asks Federal agencies to ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements, to renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with current policy, and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately.

► Clarifies that structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of Tribes, States, and local governments and identifies the Federal responsibility as wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, and cooperative prevention, education, and technical assistance.

► Utilizes the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies as well as local and private stakeholders in the wildland/urban interface; recommends using the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes Federal and State cooperators, as a forum for focusing on wildland/urban interface issues.

### FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROGRAM REVIEW

*For more information about wildland fire management or the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, contact your local agency administrator or fire program manager.*

Bureau of Land Management · USDA Forest Service · National Park Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service · Bureau of Indian Affairs  
National Interagency Fire Center



WHAT DOES  
IT MEAN  
TO ME AND  
MY JOB?

## FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW

ANSWERS FOR  
EMPLOYEES



## ABOUT THE REVIEW



The Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review was chartered by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior on December 30, 1994.

The principal agencies involved were the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management,

National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Others who participated were the National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The December 18, 1996, final report contains more than 80 recommended action items. These actions will ultimately result in improved firefighter and public safety, reduced costs and losses, and a wider acceptance, both internally and externally, of the important role that wildland fire plays in the management of our public lands.

Resource managers have been steadily moving in this direction for some time because it makes sense, but each agency has been doing it within its own boundaries, at its own pace, and based on its own agency-specific policies. The Fire Policy Report outlines for the first time a set of "umbrella" Federal fire management policies and creates a solid framework for enhancing cooperation among land management agencies. While it provides Federal agencies with broad parameters, however, it does not prohibit them from implementing agency-specific fire management programs and activities.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION?

The May 23, 1996, Implementation Action Plan outlines a strategy for implementing the recommendations of the Fire Policy Report. It is very clear

about who is responsible for what: the Management Oversight Team, Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council, National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Geographic Area Coordination Groups, Agency Administrators, special teams and task forces, and in some cases, specific individuals.

But this review wasn't done so teams could meet and more reports could be prepared. It was done to improve the health of the land and do it safely. That means every employee must get involved and do his or her part. It's what happens on the ground that counts!

So it's everyone's responsibility, led and supported by Agency Administrators. Your role may be in one or more of the following areas of emphasis:

► Agency Administrators must get involved, demonstrate their support, hold employees accountable, and be accountable themselves. We cannot be successful without commitment by top-level managers.

► Firefighter and public safety remains the first priority. Once people are safe, the second protection priority is property and natural/cultural resources, based on their relative values. This is a change from previous priorities and must be coordinated with local partners.

► Be responsible to educate yourself and others — coworkers, customers, and neighbors — about fire's role as a critical natural process in the ecosystem and about the long-term economic, ecological, and social benefits that can come from a compatible, cohesive Federal wildland fire program.

► The planning process is a critical factor if we are to make progress on the ground...and not just fire planning. Agencies must work closely with each other to ensure their *land and resource* planning processes are compatible and, when appropriate, to ensure that fire management objectives are consistent across agency jurisdictions.

Land and resource management plans and activity plans must incorporate fire as a tool to achieve resource management objectives and consider the impacts of fire exclusion.

All areas subject to wildland fires must be covered by an approved Fire Management Plan, developed with the full participation of all partners, which will describe fire management goals and objectives and present a range of options for dealing with fires when they occur.

► Working with our partners is a key part of fire policy implementation, whether we're working on Fire Management Plans, Fire Protection Agreements, prescribed fire, prevention, education, preparedness or severity planning, training, qualifications, equipment, or any other aspect of fire management. We must place more emphasis on communicating and working with our neighbors, cooperators, and partners.

► More emphasis will be placed on properly planning and conducting prescribed fire projects. This includes working with partners to assess the need for prescribed fire, the probability of success or failure, and the potential positive and negative consequences. And Agency Administrators and managers must support employees who implement a properly planned and conducted prescribed fire program, even if there are unplanned results.

► Everyone has an obligation to participate in and support the fire management program in whatever way they can. Trained, certified employees will participate in the wildland fire program, and others will provide support. Agency Administrators will be held accountable for results.

We can all help find innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of the fire policy review; the use of wildland fire crosses all functional boundaries. Every person has skills and experience that can contribute to its success.



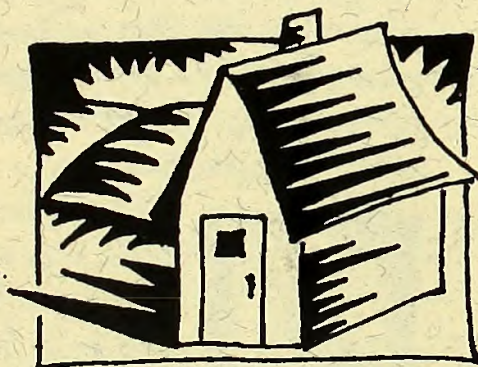
decisions based solely on what's best for the land or what would be most efficient or even most effective. Families — their homes, their pets, and their valued possessions — must be an important part of the equation.

This is not a new problem, but it's becoming a bigger problem. And it's not a problem any single agency or organization can solve alone. Federal, State, Tribal, and local land management agencies, city and county planners, homeowners, insurance companies, planning and zoning organizations, and others must work together to find better answers.

Unfortunately, most people don't think a wildland fire will destroy their home . . . until it's too late. So agencies must place more emphasis on helping the public understand the hazards and risks in the wildland/urban interface and what can be done to reduce those risks.

Ultimately, homeowners in the wildland/urban interface must take responsibility for protecting themselves. There are many things they can do to reduce the risk to their homes and their families.

They can use fire-resistant building materials, create a fuel break around their property, plan access and exit routes, and generally prepare themselves in case a fire threatens their home. Federal agencies' role is to help minimize the hazards by reducing fuels adjacent to communities, to help with fire prevention and education, and to provide technical assistance. When a fire starts, their job is wildland firefighting. Structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of other local entities.



**FEDERAL WILDLAND  
FIRE MANAGEMENT**  
POLICY & PROGRAM REVIEW

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT  
OR THE FEDERAL WILDLAND  
FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY  
AND PROGRAM REVIEW,  
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL  
LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



USDA FOREST SERVICE



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS



NATIONAL INTERAGENCY  
FIRE CENTER  
3833 S. DEVELOPMENT AVE.  
BOISE, IDAHO 83705-5354

**WHAT IS IT?**



**AND HOW  
DOES IT  
AFFECT ME?**

**FEDERAL  
WILDLAND  
FIRE  
MANAGEMENT  
POLICY  
AND  
PROGRAM  
REVIEW**

**ANSWERS FOR  
PUBLIC LAND USERS  
AND NEIGHBORS**



## WHY THE REVIEW WAS DONE

A lot of things came together during the 1994 fire season to create a renewed awareness about the impacts of wildland fire. Thirty-four firefighters died, fourteen of them on the South Canyon Fire in Colorado. In the aftermath of that incident, the Interagency Management Review Team recommended that Federal fire management agencies examine some specific issues related to wildland fire. And the agencies themselves recognized the need to address forest and rangeland health and the increasing magnitude and severity of wildland fires.



In December 1994, a review was chartered by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and conducted jointly by the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. The National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and Federal Emergency Management Agency also participated. A final report was completed in December 1995.

## WHAT THE REPORT SAYS

The report reconfirms that public and firefighter safety is the top priority. It places property and resource values together as the second priority, giving managers the flexibility to make better decisions based on values to be protected.

The report recognizes that past land use practices and a century of fire suppression have resulted in an unhealthy build-up of dead and dying vegetation. It contains recommendations for the careful return of fire to the ecosystem — allowing it to function as nearly as possible in its natural role and using it across agency boundaries to achieve long-term goals of ecosystem health.

Wildland/urban interface protection is also a major focus of the report, placing more emphasis on developing and updating fire protection agreements to accurately reflect Federal and other responsibilities.

The report outlines the very first set of “umbrella” Federal fire management policies. It creates a solid framework for enhancing cooperation among Federal land and resource management agencies as they continue to work together toward common goals, using consistent, compatible processes. It sets the stage for improving the way fire is managed for the long-term health and sustainability of the land.

## FIRE'S ROLE

Mother Nature's plan was for small, low-intensity fires to cleanse the land every now and then. But instead, humans have been interfering with her plan and, in the process, have created unhealthy ecosystems with lots of natural debris — a little like never dusting or vacuuming. This is creating a domino effect. Now fires are burning hotter and faster. Native vegetation is often replaced by non-native species, which in turn affects other pieces of the ecosystem puzzle, like insects and disease, wildlife habitat, and water supplies. And land management agencies are struggling to manage ecosystems that need help.

Our goal is to slowly and carefully reintroduce fire to the wildlands, much like Mother Nature had planned all along. But we have more things to consider as we do that — things like people's homes, their livelihoods, their recreation . . . the very air they breathe. It's no small task, and it won't be done overnight.

## BUT WHAT ABOUT SMOKEY BEAR?

Smokey is right on. He's always talked about being responsible, and no one can argue with that. Fire is a very powerful force; unleashed in the wrong place at the wrong time, it can be very dangerous. Human-caused wildfires are almost always in the wrong place at the wrong time. They usually threaten homes, campgrounds, and other values we want to protect. And they are often started at the very worst time of year, when fuels are at their driest, and burn everything in their path. That's why Smokey still wants us to be careful with matches and campfires.

## PRESCRIBED FIRE: MEDICINE FOR THE LAND

When we're sick, a doctor looks at our symptoms, assesses our general health, writes a prescription, and sets some parameters: three pills a day, drink lots of water, and get plenty of rest. Land managers look at the health of the land and describe management objectives in a land management plan. If an ecosystem isn't healthy, they sometimes decide fire is the right tool, or medicine, to make it better. Then they write a detailed plan — a prescription — that sets strict parameters for using fire to accomplish their objectives: fire will help the land here at certain times of the year and under certain conditions . . . it will be harmful there . . . and homes must be protected somewhere else.

Scientists and land managers have put a lot of thought and research into figuring out how a fire behaves and why. They can usually tell how certain grasses and shrubs will burn based on moisture content, weather conditions, and years of scientific research and experience.



Sometimes managers will ignite a fire to improve the health of the land. And sometimes they will decide, based on a land management plan, that a lightning-caused fire is part of Mother Nature's plan and that it will, in the long run, benefit the land and resources. Fire is just one of many tools a land manager can use to help the land recover or stay healthy.

## WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE

More and more people are moving away from the city, away from people and traffic, away from noise . . . and away from things they generally take for granted, like fire protection. A house or a group of houses in an otherwise undeveloped area can turn a routine wildland fire into a nightmare for firefighters and homeowners. Fire managers are unable to make tactical



## **Implementation Communication Package: How to Use It**

The nine-page Implementation Communication Package is intended as a "menu" of strategies and tools to guide field offices in their internal and external communications. Its nine attachments are to be used as "camera-ready" originals for reproduction and internal/external distribution as appropriate:

- Federal Wildland Fire Policies (2 pages) - This is the summary table of revised Federal wildland fire policies, which is also contained in the December 18, 1995, final report.
- Guiding Principles (1 page) - These guiding principles were identified during the review as being fundamental to the success of the Federal wildland fire management program and the implementation of review recommendations. This page is also a part of the December 18, 1995, final report.
- Secretaries' Memorandum of Acceptance (2 pages) - This memo is included in the December 18, 1995, final report. It articulates the endorsement by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture of the report's findings and gives specific guidance for implementation.
- Federal Fire & Aviation Leadership Council Memorandum dated May 29, 1996 (3 pages) - This memorandum was previously distributed to agency field offices to provide interim guidance on Fire Policy implementation.
- External Brochure
  - Camera-ready original, "Answers for Public Land Users and Neighbors" - To be copied as needed to inform external audiences about the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
  - Example of copied, folded brochure ready for distribution to the public as appropriate.
- Internal Brochure
  - Camera-ready original, "Answers for Employees" - To be copied as needed to inform employees about the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
  - Example of copied, folded brochure ready for distribution to employees as appropriate.
- Press Release - Draft press release to be used as is or localized as appropriate.
- Fact Sheet - For use by agency administrators, managers, public affairs specialists, and others as a quick reference about the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
- Questions & Answers - For use by agency administrators, managers, public affairs specialists, and others to assist in answering questions about the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.

If you have questions about the Communication Package or need additional copies of any of the documents, please contact Pat Entwistle, National Interagency Fire Center, (208) 387-5437.





# **Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review**

## **Implementation Communication Package**



**Department of the Interior**



**Department of Agriculture**

**July 1996**





## Introduction

This plan outlines a national communication strategy for the implementation of recommendations contained in the final report of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review dated December 18, 1995 (Fire Policy Report). Because the Fire Policy Review directly affects five land management agencies in two Departments, communication emphasis may not be *consistent* nationwide but should be *compatible*. This plan and its attachments were created with that in mind – they are very broad in nature and in most cases do not reflect specific assignments. They are intended to offer a "menu" of communication strategies and tools. All messages, tools, and methods may not be appropriate for all audiences.

Specific implementation actions are described in the May 23, 1996, Implementation Action Plan (Action Plan).

The Guiding Principles (Attachment 1) are considered fundamental to the success of the Federal wildland fire management program and should be incorporated into all public affairs and outreach activities as well.

While the umbrella policies (Attachment 2) are a key part of the Fire Policy Report and may tend to become the focal point for discussions, the narrative sections of the report, including the goals and actions, provide context and help convey the history, current situation, and long-term goals for the program.

## Background

The Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review was chartered by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior on December 30, 1994. It was prompted by the following:

- √ The severity of the 1994 fire season resulted in an increased awareness of the dangers of fire and the natural role of wildland fire.
- √ At an October 1994 House Agriculture and Natural Resources hearing, the two Departments were asked to jointly address wildland fire issues.
- √ The South Canyon Fire Interagency Management Review Team recommended that land management agencies examine several issues related to wildland fire.
- √ In August 1994, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Cabinet Affairs requested a nationwide review of wildland fire issues.
- √ The agencies themselves recognized the need to address forest and rangeland health and the increasing magnitude and severity of wildland fires.

The review was jointly conducted by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior. The principal agencies involved were the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Others who participated were the National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The findings and recommendations were accepted and endorsed by both the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture in December 1995.





## Goals/Objectives

1. The goals of the *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review* are to ensure that:
  - a. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in all wildland fire management actions.
  - b. Wildland fire is reintroduced into the ecosystem as a critical natural process.
  - c. Federal agency fire management policies are uniform, compatible, and cohesive and enhance efficient interagency cooperation.
  - d. Wildland fire is managed consistently across agency jurisdictional boundaries, with the involvement of all partners.
  - e. Policies and programs are based on sound scientific, ecological, and economic principles.
  - f. Policies and programs incorporate the experience of the past, reflect today's values, and be able to adapt to the challenges of the future.
  - g. Communication and collaboration are emphasized in all actions and cooperative relationships are strengthened.
  - h. Federal wildland fire management policies and programs
    - (1) recognize that public and private values are at high risk
    - (2) are responsive to the complexity and magnitude of the current threat of catastrophic wildland fire
    - (3) encourage and facilitate a more proactive approach to wildland fire management.
  - i. The role of Federal agencies in the Wildland/Urban Interface is clarified to include wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance.
  - j. More emphasis is placed on educating internal and external audiences about how and why we use and manage wildland fire.
  - k. Clarify the responsibility and accountability of employees and managers in the fire management program.
2. The goal of the *Implementation Communications Plan* is to gain the understanding and support of employees, neighboring land owners, Tribal governments, partners, cooperators, interest groups, and other interested parties as the Federal agencies work with them to implement the recommendations of the Fire Policy Report. The objectives are to inform key internal and external audiences about the policies, principles, and recommendations and to communicate the implementation strategies outlined in the Action Plan.





## **Key Audiences - Internal**

(Note: Intended as examples only; audiences may differ by agency and by geographic area.)

1. Federal Land Management Agencies (Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs)
  - a. Agency Administrators and Managers
  - b. Employees in Wildland Fire-Related Positions
  - c. Program Leaders and Staff in other Resource Disciplines
  - d. Planning Staff
  - e. Public Affairs Specialists
  - f. Legislative Coordinators
  - g. Environmental Education Specialists
  - h. Scientists
2. Other Federal Cooperators (Department of Defense, National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Environmental Protection Agency)
3. Other Partners (State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, State Fire Marshals, and Tribal Governments)

## Objectives

1. Inform and educate employees about the recommendations and actions resulting from the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
2. Increase understanding of the long-term economic, ecological, and social benefits of the goals of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
3. Enlist the support of Agency Administrators, managers, and employees at all levels to protect valuable property and resources from wildland fire disasters while safely and effectively managing wildland fire as a critical natural process.
4. Encourage all employees to become ambassadors to gain the support of external audiences.
5. Emphasize how and why Fire Policy recommendations should be incorporated into all planning and management activities in order to meet the stated goals.
6. Obtain feedback on innovative ways to meet the stated goals and objectives, barriers to successful implementation, and suggestions on how to overcome those barriers.

## Messages

1. Federal land management agencies now have, for the first time, one set of “umbrella” policies to guide Federal wildland fire management.
2. Public and firefighter safety continues to be the top priority.
3. Placing natural resources and property at the same level – as the second protection priority after human safety – will give managers more flexibility to consider relative values in their decision making.





4. The use of wildland fire as a management tool must be incorporated into the resource and fire management planning systems. Every area subject to wildland fires must be covered by an approved Fire Management Plan that is responsive to land and resource management plan objectives, and any action on a wildland fire must be based upon direction in an approved Fire management Plan.
  - The reintroduction of fire into the ecosystem as a critical natural process is based on sound science and adaptive management and will result in ecological and economic benefits.
5. Wildland fire must be managed on a landscape scale, across agency jurisdictions.
6. Successful implementation will require the involvement and support of all partners – from all levels and disciplines – in every aspect of fire management, e.g., planning, preparedness, suppression, use, monitoring, research, and prevention.
7. The Federal government is a partner in wildland/urban interface protection, including firefighting, fuels reduction, education, and technical assistance; structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of others – in some cases, Tribal, State, and local governments. All interface areas must be covered by Fire Protection Agreements that reflect the appropriate responsibilities.
8. More emphasis will be placed on fire management qualifications and job performance standards for agency administrators and fire program managers and staff.
9. Trained, certified employees will participate in the fire management program, others will support it, and managers will be held accountable.

#### Tools and Methods

1. Distribute Implementation Action Plan, along with agency-specific instructions and this communication package, to all agency field offices.
2. Make use of Internal Brochure, Fact Sheet, Q&A's, and other appropriate tools to inform employees about their role in Fire Policy implementation.
3. Consider an interagency satellite teleconference, produced at the BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, to include a panel discussion by the five agency fire directors followed by interactive questions and answers. This would be broadcast to field offices via C-Band transmission, which can be picked up by a standard satellite dish. Entire presentation could be videotaped at receiving locations and/or by the National Training Center staff for additional distribution. Total cost for production and uplink would be less than \$10,000.
4. Assign a top-level interagency team to discuss the Fire Policy Review and implementation at appropriate state-level meetings, i.e., fire staff conferences, public affairs conferences, management team meetings, etc.
5. Agency fire leaders meet with appropriate management groups (personal, teleconference, video, etc.) to inform them about the Fire Policy Review and implementation, emphasize their roles and responsibilities, enlist their support, and get their feedback.
6. Local managers are responsible for maintaining two-way communications with employees throughout implementation.





7. Involve leadership/management teams in all phases of implementation, but particularly as the use of wildland fire is incorporated into resource/land management planning and Fire Management Plans are developed.
8. Agency Administrators and managers convey the history, current situation, long-term goals, and implementation actions, including individual responsibilities, to all employees.
9. Develop internal mechanisms for sharing implementation updates with employees, including regular updates from top-level fire management officials.
10. Utilize existing communication tools (conference calls, newsletters, videos, agency director messages, all-employee meetings, etc.) to maintain and enhance communications.
11. Share success stories and innovative implementation actions.

### **Key Audiences - External**

(Note: Intended as examples only; audiences may differ by agency and by geographic area.)

1. Congressional/Legislative
2. Other State, Local, and Tribal Entities
  - a. State Agencies (Wildlife, Fish/Game, Commerce, Environment, Water Resources, Agriculture, Recreation)
  - b. Governors
  - c. Western Governors' Association
  - d. Western States Land Commissioners' Association
  - e. County Commissioners, Planners, and Other Appropriate County Agencies/Organizations
  - f. National Association of County Organizations
  - g. National Association of Conservation Districts
  - h. Tribal Governments
  - i. Intertribal Timber Council
3. Key Public/User Groups
  - a. General
    - (1) Advisory Councils
    - (2) Environmental/Conservation Groups
    - (3) Industry Groups (Livestock, Timber, Mining, Agriculture, etc.)
    - (4) Recreation Groups
    - (5) Wildlife Groups
    - (6) Respondents to Requests for Public Comments





b. Specific

- (1) Natural Resources Defense Council
- (2) Quincy Library Group
- (3) American Forests
- (4) Cascadia Fire Ecology Education Project
- (5) The Wilderness Society
- (6) Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- (7) Forest Industries Councils
- (8) The Nature Conservancy
- (9) Congressional Fire Caucus
- (10) Public Lands Foundation
- (11) Congressional Fire Services Institute
- (12) Western Senate Coalition
- (13) Georgia-Pacific Corporation
- (14) WESTAR
- (15) Sierra Club
- (16) Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- (17) National Cattlemen's Association
- (18) National Wool Growers' Association
- (19) National Parks and Conservation Association

4. Professional Organizations

- a. Society of American Foresters
- b. Society for Range Management
- c. Wildlife Society
- d. Society for Ecological Restoration
- e. Natural Areas Association
- f. National Wildfire Suppression Association
- g. International Association of Fire Fighters
- h. National Volunteer Fire Council
- i. International Association of Fire Chiefs

5. Education Groups

- a. National Science Teachers' Association
- b. North American Association for Environmental Education
- c. Education Committee, National Association of Conservation Districts
- d. Extension Offices, Department of Agriculture
- e. State and Local Education Associations
- f. National Environmental Education and Training Foundation
- g. Western Regional Environmental Education Council

6. Wildland/Urban Interface Interests

- a. Insurance Institute for Policy Loss Reduction
- b. National Home Builders' Association
- c. State Fire Marshals
- d. Planning and Zoning Commissions
- e. Rural Fire Departments





- f. Volunteer Fire Departments
- g. Homeowners/Homeowners' Associations

### Objectives

1. Increase understanding of the long-term economic, ecological, and social benefits of the goals of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.
2. Enlist the support and assistance of education and other professionals in educating the public about the positive roles and possible negative impacts of wildland fire.
3. Generate support, cooperation, and assistance in protecting valuable property and resources from wildland fire disasters, while safely and effectively managing wildland fire as a tool and critical natural process to enhance the long-term health of the land.
4. Enlist support and assistance in reducing the hazards and risks from wildland fire in the wildland/urban interface.
5. Make residents of wildland/urban interface communities aware of their responsibility to protect their homes from wildland fire.
6. Garner support for and involvement in partnerships to develop hazard-mitigation plans with the ultimate goal of reducing losses in the wildland/urban interface.

### Messages

1. Public and firefighter safety continues to be the top priority.
2. Successful implementation will require the involvement and support of partners, cooperators, landowners, and communities.
3. Federal land management agencies now have, for the first time, one set of “umbrella” policies to guide Federal wildland fire management.
4. More emphasis will be placed on using wildland fire to maintain/enhance resources and allowing it to function in its natural role, with the ultimate goal being the long-term health of land and resources. All audiences must receive a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion.
  - Research provides a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management.
  - Integrating fire into land management is not a one-time, immediate fix but a continual, long-term process. It is not an end in itself but rather a means to a more healthy end.
5. Smokey Bear’s fire prevention message is still valid; everyone must take responsibility for preventing unwanted wildland fires that may have adverse effects. However that message must be balanced with accurate information about the ecological benefits of fire.





6. Wildland fire must be managed on a landscape scale, across management boundaries.
  - Fire management practices must be consistent/compatible in areas with similar management objectives, regardless of jurisdiction.
7. The Federal government is a partner in wildland/urban interface protection. Its role includes firefighting; fuels reduction (reducing the amount of highly flammable live and dead vegetation) on Federal lands adjacent to the interface; education; and technical assistance. Structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of others – often Tribal, State, and local governments. Homeowners in the wildland/urban interface are responsible for making their homes fire safe.
8. Through partnerships, Federal agencies will work with others to focus on wildland/urban interface issues.
  - The Western Governors' Association will serve as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, in the wildland/urban interface, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection.
  - The National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program (includes Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association) will serve as a forum for focusing on interface issues.
9. Federal agencies will place more emphasis on establishing partnerships with fire management contractors, cooperators, and others, encouraging and assisting them to adopt and implement Federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc.
10. Federal fire management agencies will look at new ways of doing business, with more emphasis on internal and external communications.

#### Tools and Methods

1. Distribute Implementation Action Plan, external brochure, press release, and other communication tools to appropriate audiences, along with information about how they may be specifically involved and/or affected.
2. Agency Administrators and managers meet with appropriate external groups to inform them about the Fire Policy Review and implementation, enlist their support, and get their suggestions and feedback. Involve public affairs offices in decisions about what contacts to make and what communication tools to use, e.g., Fact Sheet, Q&A's, External Brochure, etc.
3. Brief key government and community leaders and set up a mechanism to keep them updated on key actions or those with local implications. Send advance copies of press releases and other outreach materials as appropriate.
4. Issue national and local press releases; mail copies to interested/affected parties.
5. Invite news media to do feature stories.





6. Schedule field trips to show positive/negative effects of fire, using recent and historical fire sites as well as prescribed fire projects. Make use of Fact Sheet, Q&A's, External Brochure, and other tools.
7. Be proactive about involving partners, cooperators, and neighbors in decisions that will affect them.
8. Look for ways to incorporate the "role-of-fire" message into existing outreach materials. Avoid negative terms, such as damage, devastation, destroyed, etc., in releases and discussions about fire; balance with message about fire's positive role whenever possible. Explain why fire is good at some specific times and in some specific places and when and why it can be bad. Explain why rehabilitation is necessary after some fires, while some fires have positive effects. Be sensitive about sending conflicting messages.
9. Use ongoing fire situations to deliver Fire Policy messages.
10. Incorporate Fire Policy message into regularly scheduled meetings with, or mailings to, external groups and individuals, using prepared tools; encourage two-way communications.
11. Share success stories and innovative implementation actions.
12. Develop local contact lists based on target audiences; use for mailings, personal contacts, etc.
13. Inform advisory councils about the Fire Policy Review and involve them in implementation as appropriate.

Attachments:

- 1 - Revised Policies
- 2 - Guiding Principles
- 3 - Secretaries' Memorandum of Acceptance
- 4 - Leadership Council Memo Dated May 29, 1996
- 5 - Sample Press Release
- 6 - External Brochure
- 7 - Internal Brochure
- 8 - Fact Sheet
- 9 - Questions & Answers





# F E D E R A L   W I L D L A N D   F I R E   P O L I C I E S

	DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	USDA FOREST SERVICE	REVISED FEDERAL
<b>SAFETY</b>	No wildfire situation, with the possible exception of threat to human survival, requires the exposure of firefighters to life-threatening situations.	Conduct fire suppression in a timely, effective, and efficient manner with a high regard for public and firefighter safety. Forest officers responsible for planning and implementing suppression action shall not knowingly or carelessly subordinate human lives to other values.	Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.
<b>PLANNING</b>	Fire will be used to achieve responsible and definable land-use benefits through the integration of fire suppression and prescribed fire as a management tool.	Integrate consideration of fire protection and use into the formulation and evaluation of land and resource management objectives, prescriptions, and practices.	Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, values to be protected, and land and resource management plans and must address public health issues. Fire Management Plans must also address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include the full range of fire management actions.
<b>WILDLAND FIRE</b>			Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, across agency boundaries, and will be based upon best available science. All use of fire for resource management requires a formal prescription. Management actions taken on wildland fires will be consistent with approved Fire Management Plans.
<b>WILDFIRE</b>	Fires are classified as either wildfire or prescribed fire. All wildfires will be suppressed. Wildfire may not be used to accomplish land-use and resource-management objectives. Only prescribed fire may be used for this purpose.	Wildland fires are defined as either a wildfire or a prescribed fire. Respond to a fire burning on National Forest System land based on whether it is a wildfire or a prescribed fire; implement an appropriate suppression response to a wildfire.	
<b>USE OF FIRE</b>			
<b>PRESCRIBED FIRE</b>	Prescribed fire may be utilized to accomplish land-use or resource-management objectives only when defined in prescribed fire plans.	Use prescribed fires, from either management ignitions or natural ignitions, in a safe, carefully controlled, cost-effective manner as a means of achieving management objectives defined in Forest Plans. Prepare a burn plan for all prescribed fire projects.	
<b>PRESCRIBED NATURAL FIRE</b>	Prescribed fire, designed to accomplish the management objective of allowing naturally occurring fire to play its role in the ecosystem, will be allowed to burn if provided for in a Fire Management Plan, a valid prescription exists, and the fire is monitored.	Allow lightning-caused fires to play, as nearly as possible, their natural ecological role in Wilderness.	
<b>PREPAREDNESS</b>	Bureaus will maintain an adequate state of preparedness and adequate resources for wildland fire suppression. Preparedness plans will include considerations for cost-effective training and equipping of suppression forces, maintenance of facilities and equipment, positioning of resources, and criteria for analyzing, prioritizing, and responding to various levels of fire situations.	Plan, train, equip, and make available an organization that ensures cost-efficient wildfire protection in support of land and resource management direction as stated in Fire Management Action Plans. Base presuppression planning on the National Fire Management Analysis System.	Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment.
<b>SUPPRESSION</b>	Wildfire losses will be held to the minimum possible through timely and effective suppression action consistent with values at risk and within the framework of land-use objectives and plans.	Conduct fire suppression in a timely, effective, and efficient manner with a high regard for public and firefighter safety.	Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.
<b>PREVENTION</b>	Wildfire prevention is an integral part of the total suppression program and ranges from public education to hazard reduction activities. Bureaus will develop and participate in interagency fire prevention cooperatives.	The objective of wildfire prevention is the cost-efficient reduction of fire suppression expenditures and damages from human-caused fires to levels commensurate with resource management objectives and fire management direction.	Agencies will work together and with other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.





# F E D E R A L   W I L D L A N D   F I R E   P O L I C I E S

	DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	USDA FOREST SERVICE	REVISED FEDERAL
<b>PROTECTION PRIORITIES</b>	The standard criterion to be used in establishing protection priorities is the potential to destroy: (1) human life, (2) property, and (3) resource values. (National Interagency Mobilization Guide, March 1995, NFES 2092.)	The standard criterion to be used in establishing protection priorities is the potential to destroy: (1) human life, (2) property, and (3) resource values. (National Interagency Mobilization Guide, March 1995, NFES 2092.)	Protection priorities are (1) human life and (2) property and natural/cultural resources. If it becomes necessary to prioritize between property and natural/cultural resources, this is done based on relative values to be protected, commensurate with fire management costs. Once people have been committed to an incident, these resources become the highest value to be protected.
<b>INTERAGENCY COOPERATION</b>	Bureaus will coordinate and cooperate with each other and with other protection agencies for greater efficiency and effectiveness.	Develop and implement mutually beneficial fire management agreements with other Federal agencies and adjoining countries. Cooperate, participate, and consult with the States on fire protection for non-Federal wildlands.	Fire management planning, preparedness, suppression, fire use, monitoring, and research will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners.
<b>STANDARDIZATION</b>	The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides a formalized system to agree upon standards of training, equipment, aircraft, suppression priorities, and other operational areas. (Memorandum of Understanding, NWCG, II, Function and Purpose.)	The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides a formalized system to agree upon standards of training, equipment, aircraft, suppression priorities, and other operational areas. (Memorandum of Understanding, NWCG, II, Function and Purpose.)	Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.
<b>ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY</b>	Bureaus will ensure that all fire management activities are planned and based upon sound considerations, including economic concerns. Bureaus will coordinate and cooperate with each other and with other protection agencies for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Wildfire damage will be held to the minimum possible, giving full consideration to minimizing expenditure of public funds for effective suppression.	Provide a cost-efficient level of wildfire protection on National Forest lands commensurate with the threat to life and property and commensurate with the potential for resource and environmental damage based on hazard, risk, values, and management objectives.	Fire management programs and activities will be based on economic analyses that incorporate commodity, non-commodity, and social values.
<b>WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE</b>	Emergency assistance may be provided to properties in the vicinity of public and Indian lands so long as Departmental lands or the public's interest is not jeopardized. Bureaus will develop and participate in interagency fire prevention cooperatives.	Structural fire suppression, which includes exterior and interior actions on burning structures, is the responsibility of State and local government. Structural fire protection from advancing wildfire within the National Forest protection boundary is the responsibility of State and local fire departments and the Forest Service.	The operational role of Federal agencies as a partner in the wildland/urban interface is wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire protection is the responsibility of Tribal, State, and local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural suppression activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some Federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.)
<b>ADMINISTRATOR AND EMPLOYEE ROLES</b>	Wildfires are considered emergencies, and their suppression will be given priority over normal Departmental programs.	Every Forest Service employee has the responsibility to support and participate in wildfire suppression activities as the situation demands.	Employees who are trained and certified will participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as needed. Administrators are responsible and will be accountable for making employees available.





# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. *Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.*
- B. *The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.* Federal agency land and resource management plans set the objectives for the use and desired future condition of the various public lands.
- C. *Fire management plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.*
- D. *Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.* Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.
- E. *Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.* Federal agency administrators are adjusting and reorganizing programs to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. As part of this process, investments in fire management activities must be evaluated against other agency programs in order to effectively accomplish the overall mission, set short- and long-term priorities, and clarify management accountability.
- F. *Fire management plans and activities are based upon the best available science.* Knowledge and experience are developed among all wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make this available to all fire managers.
- G. *Fire management plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.*
- H. *Federal, State, Tribal, and local interagency coordination and cooperation are essential.* Increasing costs and smaller work forces require that public agencies pool their human resources to successfully deal with the ever increasing and more complex fire management tasks. Full collaboration among Federal agencies and between the Federal agencies and State, local, and private entities results in a mobile fire management work force available to the full range of public needs.
- I. *Standardization of policies and procedures among Federal agencies is an ongoing objective.* Consistency of plans and operations provides the fundamental platform upon which Federal agencies can cooperate and integrate fire activities across agency boundaries and provide leadership for cooperation with State and local fire management organizations.







WASHINGTON



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

## MEMORANDUM

To:       Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management  
          Chief, USDA Forest Service  
          Director, National Park Service  
          Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
          Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
          Director, National Biological Service

Subject:   Federal Wildland Fire Policy

We are pleased to accept and endorse the principles, policies, and recommendations in the attached Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Report. These principles and policies provide a common approach to wildland fire by our two Departments. We look forward to the endorsement of these principles and policies by our Federal partner agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense, so that we have a truly Federal approach to wildland fire. We invite our partners in Tribal, State, and local governments to endorse these principles and policies in order to promote an integrated, intergovernmental approach to the management of wildland fire.

The principles and policies of the Report reiterate the commitment all of us have made to firefighter and public safety. No resource or property value is worth endangering people; all of our actions and our plans must reflect this commitment. Our second priority is to protect resources and property, based on the relative values to be protected. We must be realistic about our abilities to fight severe wildfire. As natural resource managers we must make prudent decisions based on sound assessments of all the risks. Good management reduces the likelihood of catastrophic fire by investing in risk-reduction measures; good management also recognizes when nature must take its course. The principles and policies of the Report, along with the recommended actions, will improve our collective ability to be better wildland fire risk managers.

The philosophy, as well as the specific policies and recommendations, of the Report continues to move our approach to wildland fire management beyond the traditional realms of fire suppression by further integrating fire into the management of our lands and resources in an ongoing and systematic manner, consistent with public health and environmental quality considerations. We strongly support the integration of wildland fire into our land management planning and implementation activities. Managers must learn to use fire as one of the basic tools for accomplishing their resource management objectives.



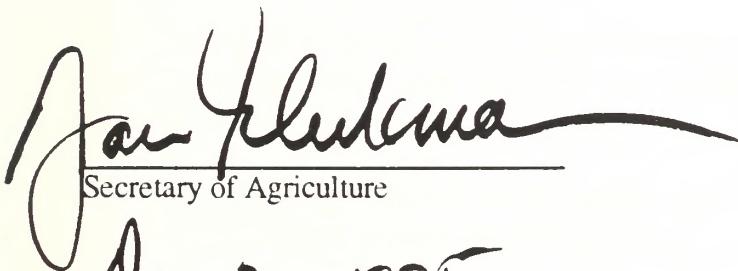


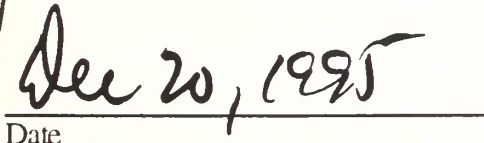
By this memorandum we are directing that you assume the responsibility for the implementation of the principles, policies, and recommendations in the Report. Implementation should be a matter of high priority within your bureaus and should:

- Be consistent with the nine Guiding Principles contained in the Report.
- Occur on a joint, interagency basis wherever possible to ensure the consistent application of policy.
- Involve a broad spectrum of program areas, including resource managers, agency administrators, scientists, and planners, as well as the wildland fire management staffs.
- Address local, interagency, integrated planning as a critical means of ensuring that on-the-ground implementation is as effective as possible.
- Coordinate with other Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense.
- Ensure coordination with Tribal, State, and local partners.
- Recognize the results of the wildland-urban interface project sponsored by the Western Governors Association.

We request that you prepare a joint, integrated strategy for implementing the Report by no later than March 1, 1996. At a minimum this strategy should describe the priorities, timeframes, responsibilities, leadership, and the participation of other Federal agencies and non-Federal partners and cooperators. Each of you should designate a senior official, with the authority to ensure implementation, to work in concert with the two Departments to guide overall implementation of the Report.

We recognize that complete implementation of all of the recommendations will take some time. Priority should be placed on educating and informing employees of the philosophy, principles, and policies of the Report and on examining how quickly and efficiently we can update resource and land management plans to incorporate wildland fire considerations.

  
Secretary of Agriculture

  
Date

  
Secretary of the Interior

  
Date







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## FEDERAL FIRE & AVIATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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May 29, 1996

### Memorandum

Subject: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review "Umbrella" Policies

There have been many questions about implementing Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (Policy Review) policies. The Policy Review established 13 "umbrella" Federal policies (pages 6 and 7). These "umbrella" Federal policies do not replace existing agency-specific policies but will compel each agency to review its policies to insure compatibility.

After thorough review of the "umbrella" Federal wildland fire management policies for compatibility with current agency-specific policy, the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council members have agreed that the following seven policies are compatible with existing agency policy and the concepts associated with each should be adopted immediately by all Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council member agencies.

**SAFETY** - Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.

**PLANNING** - Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, values to be protected, and land and resource management plans and must address public health issues. Fire Management Plans must also address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include the full range of fire management actions.

**PREPAREDNESS** - Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment.

**PREVENTION** - Agencies will work together and with other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.

**INTERAGENCY COOPERATION** - Fire management planning, preparedness, suppression, fire use, monitoring, and research will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners.





**WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE** - The operational role of Federal agencies as a partner in the wildland/urban interface is wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire protection is the responsibility of Tribal, State, and local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural suppression activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some Federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.)

**ADMINISTRATOR AND EMPLOYEE ROLES** - Employees who are trained and certified will participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; noncertified employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as needed. Administrators will be responsible, be held accountable, and make employees available to participate in the wildland fire program.

Each agency will begin to go through their policy updating process to make the necessary wording changes in order to ensure compatibility with the remaining six “umbrella” policies. Until those changes are made, the existing agency-specific policies will remain in effect. You will be notified by your agency when the agency-specific policies become compatible.

**WILDLAND FIRE** - Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, across agency boundaries, and will be based upon best available science. All use of fire for resource management requires a formal prescription. Management actions taken on wildland fires will be consistent with approved Fire Management Plans.

**USE OF FIRE** - Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role.

**SUPPRESSION** - Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.

**PROTECTION PRIORITIES** - Protection priorities are (1) human life and (2) property and natural/cultural resources. If it becomes necessary to prioritize between property and natural/cultural resources, this is done based on relative values to be protected, commensurate with fire management costs. Once people have been committed to an incident, these resources become the highest value to be protected.

**STANDARDIZATION** - Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values to be protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.





ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY - Fire management programs and activities will be based on economic analyses that incorporate commodity, non-commodity, and social values.

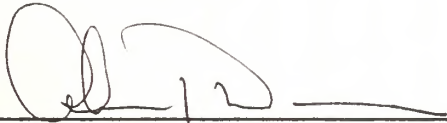
An interagency Implementation Action Report has been developed that provides additional information, clarification, and direction on how the 84 Fire Policy action items will be implemented. You will be receiving a copy of this report and agency-specific implementation instructions within a month.

Concurrence:



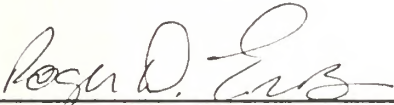
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Dr. Mary Jo Lavin, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C.



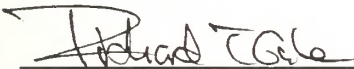
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Al Dunton, Associate Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, Bureau of Land Management, Boise, ID



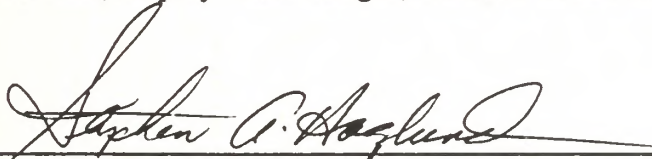
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Roger Erb, Chief Fire Management Branch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boise, ID



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Rick Gale, Deputy Chief Ranger, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.



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Steve Haglund, Chief Branch of Fire Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Boise, ID





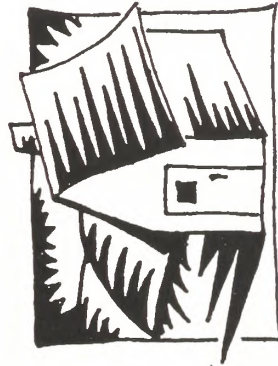
decisions based solely on what's best for the land or what would be most efficient or even most effective. Families — their homes, their pets, and their valued possessions — must be an important part of the equation.

This is not a new problem, but it's becoming a bigger problem. And it's not a problem any single agency or organization can solve alone. Federal, State, Tribal, and local land management agencies, city and county planners, homeowners, insurance companies, planning and zoning organizations, and others must work together to find better answers.

Unfortunately, most people don't think a wildland fire will destroy their home . . . until it's too late. So agencies must place more emphasis on helping the public understand the hazards and risks in the wildland/urban interface and what can be done to reduce those risks.

Ultimately, homeowners in the wildland/urban interface must take responsibility for protecting themselves. There are many things they can do

to reduce the risk to their homes and their families. They can use fire-resistant building materials, create a fuel break around their property, plan access and exit routes, and generally prepare themselves in case a fire threatens their home. Federal agencies' role is to help minimize the hazards by reducing fuels adjacent to communities, to help with fire prevention and education, and to provide technical assistance. When a fire starts, their job is wildland firefighting. Structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of other local entities.



## FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROGRAM REVIEW

### WHAT IS IT?



### AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

OR THE FEDERAL WILDLAND

FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY

AND PROGRAM REVIEW,

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



USDA FOREST SERVICE



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS



NATIONAL INTERAGENCY

FIRE CENTER

3833 S. DEVELOPMENT AVE.

BOISE, IDAHO 83705-5354

# FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW

ANSWERS FOR  
PUBLIC LAND USERS  
AND NEIGHBORS





## WHY THE REVIEW WAS DONE

A lot of things came together during the 1994 fire season to create a renewed awareness about the impacts of wildland fire. Thirty-four firefighters died, fourteen of them on the South Canyon Fire in Colorado. In the aftermath of that incident, the Interagency Management Review Team recommended that Federal fire management agencies examine some specific issues related to wildland fire. And the agencies themselves recognized the need to address forest and rangeland health and the increasing magnitude and severity of wildland fires.

In December 1994, a review was chartered by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and conducted jointly by the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. The National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and Federal Emergency Management Agency also participated. A final report was completed in December 1995.

## WHAT THE REPORT SAYS

The report reconfirms that public and firefighter safety is the top priority. It places property and resource values together as the second priority, giving managers the flexibility to make better decisions based on values to be protected.

The report recognizes that past land use practices and a century of fire suppression have resulted in an unhealthy build-up of dead and dying vegetation. It contains recommendations for the careful return of fire to the ecosystem — allowing it to function as nearly as possible in its natural role and using it across agency boundaries to achieve long-term goals of ecosystem health.

Wildland/urban interface protection is also a major focus of the report, placing more emphasis on developing and updating fire protection agreements to accurately reflect Federal and other responsibilities.

The report outlines the very first set of “umbrella” Federal fire management policies. It creates a solid framework for enhancing cooperation among Federal land and resource management agencies as they continue to work together toward common goals, using consistent, compatible processes. It sets the stage for improving the way fire is managed for the long-term health and sustainability of the land.

## FIRE'S ROLE

Mother Nature's plan was for small, low-intensity fires to cleanse the land every now and then. But instead, humans have been interfering with her plan and, in the process, have created unhealthy ecosystems with lots of natural debris — a little like never dusting or vacuuming. This is creating a domino effect. Now fires are burning hotter and faster. Native vegetation is often replaced by non-native species, which in turn affects other pieces of the ecosystem puzzle, like insects and disease, wildlife habitat, and water supplies. And land management agencies are struggling to manage ecosystems that need help.

Our goal is to slowly and carefully reintroduce fire to the wildlands, much like Mother Nature had planned all along. But we have more things to consider as we do that — things like people's homes, their livelihoods, their recreation . . . the very air they breathe. It's no small task, and it won't be done overnight.

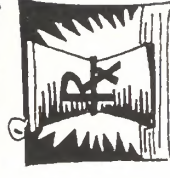
## BUT WHAT ABOUT SMOKEY BEAR?

Smokey is right on. He's always talked about being responsible, and no one can argue with that. Fire is a very powerful force; unleashed in the wrong place at the wrong time, it can be very dangerous. Human-caused wildfires are almost always in the wrong place at the wrong time. They usually threaten homes, campgrounds, and other values we want to protect. And they are often started at the very worst time of year, when fuels are at their driest, and burn everything in their path. That's why Smokey still wants us to be careful with matches and campfires.

## PRESCRIBED FIRE: MEDICINE FOR THE LAND

When we're sick, a doctor looks at our symptoms, assesses our general health, writes a prescription, and sets some parameters: three pills a day, drink lots of water, and get plenty of rest. Land managers look at the health of the land and describe management objectives in a land management plan. If an ecosystem isn't healthy, they sometimes decide fire is the right tool, or medicine, to make it better. Then they write a detailed plan — a prescription — that sets strict parameters for using fire to accomplish their objectives: fire will help the land here at certain times of the year and under certain conditions . . . it will be harmful there . . . and homes must be protected somewhere else.

Scientists and land managers have put a lot of thought and research into figuring out how a fire behaves and why. They can usually tell how certain grasses and shrubs will burn based on moisture content, weather conditions, and years of scientific research and experience.



Sometimes managers will ignite a fire to improve the health of the land. And sometimes they will decide, based on a land management plan, that a lightning-caused fire is part of Mother Nature's plan and that it will, in the long run, benefit the land and resources. Fire is just one of many tools a land manager can use to help the land recover or stay healthy.

## WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE

More and more people are moving away from the city, away from people and traffic, away from noise . . . and away from things they generally take for granted, like fire protection. A house or a group of houses in an otherwise undeveloped area can turn a routine wildland fire into a nightmare for firefighters and homeowners. Fire managers are unable to make tactical





## WHAT IS THE URGENCY?

Over the past century, land-use practices and our good efforts to suppress all fires have slowly but surely changed the face of the landscape. Dead vegetation has accumulated unnaturally in many places, and we are now faced with the reality of larger, more severe wildland fires. Not only are these intense wildland fires dangerous and difficult to control, but they are generally much more harmful to the resources than the low-intensity fires Mother Nature intended as a housekeeping tool.

The increasing challenge of protecting wildland/urban interface areas needs immediate attention. This is not a new problem, and we've been struggling for many years to find a solution. Federal agencies cannot solve this problem alone, but they can work with state and local organizations, communities, and homeowners to help close the growing gap between the problem and the solution.

### KEY POINTS OF THE REPORT

- Reconfirms that public and firefighter safety is the top priority.
- Adjusts protection priorities from a strict 1 - human life, 2 - property, and 3 - resource values to 1 - human life and 2 - property and natural/cultural resources, based on relative values to be protected.
- Creates a framework for allowing fire to function, as nearly as possible, in its natural ecological role and for using fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health.
- Places heavy emphasis on partnerships within the Federal fire management agencies; with State, Tribal, and local governments; and with the private sector.
- Directs agencies to jointly develop programs to expand the use of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems.

► Requires that fire management goals and objectives be set forth in land and resource management plans.

► Requires that every area subject to wildland fires be covered by a Fire Management Plan that is responsive to land and resource management plan objectives.

► Asks Federal agencies to ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements, to renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with current policy, and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately.

► Clarifies that structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of Tribes, States, and local governments and identifies the Federal responsibility as wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, and cooperative prevention, education, and technical assistance.

► Utilizes the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies as well as local and private stakeholders in the wildland/urban interface; recommends using the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes Federal and State cooperators, as a forum for focusing on wildland/urban interface issues.

## FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROGRAM REVIEW

*For more information about wildland fire management or the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, contact your local agency administrator or fire program manager.*

Bureau of Land Management · USDA Forest Service · National Park Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service · Bureau of Indian Affairs  
National Interagency Fire Center



WHAT DOES  
IT MEAN  
TO ME AND  
MY JOB?

# FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW

ANSWERS FOR  
EMPLOYEES





## ABOUT THE REVIEW



The Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review was chartered by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior on December 30, 1994.

The principal agencies involved were the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Others who participated were the National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The December 18, 1996, final report contains more than 80 recommended action items. These actions will ultimately result in improved firefighter and public safety, reduced costs and losses, and a wider acceptance, both internally and externally, of the important role that wildland fire plays in the management of our public lands.

Resource managers have been steadily moving in this direction for some time because it makes sense, but each agency has been doing it within its own boundaries, at its own pace, and based on its own agency-specific policies. The Fire Policy Report outlines for the first time a set of "umbrella" Federal fire management policies and creates a solid framework for enhancing cooperation among land management agencies. While it provides Federal agencies with broad parameters, however, it does not prohibit them from implementing agency-specific fire management programs and activities.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION?

The May 23, 1996, Implementation Action Plan outlines a strategy for implementing the recommendations of the Fire Policy Report. It is very clear

about who is responsible for what: the Management Oversight Team, Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council, National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Geographic Area Coordination Groups, Agency Administrators, special teams and task forces, and in some cases, specific individuals.

But this review wasn't done so teams could meet and more reports could be prepared. It was done to improve the health of the land and do it safely. That means every employee must get involved and do his or her part. It's what happens on the ground that counts!

So it's everyone's responsibility, led and supported by Agency Administrators. Your role may be in one or more of the following areas of emphasis:

► Agency Administrators must get involved, demonstrate their support, hold employees accountable, and be accountable themselves. We cannot be successful without commitment by top-level managers.

► Firefighter and public safety remains the first priority. Once people are safe, the second protection priority is property and natural/cultural resources, based on their relative values. This is a change from previous priorities and must be coordinated with local partners.

► Be responsible to educate yourself and others — coworkers, customers, and neighbors — about fire's role as a critical natural process in the ecosystem and about the long-term economic, ecological, and social benefits that can come from a compatible, cohesive Federal wildland fire program.

► The planning process is a critical factor if we are to make progress on the ground... and not just *fire* planning. Agencies must work closely with each other to ensure their *land and resource* planning processes are compatible and, when appropriate, to ensure that fire management objectives are consistent across agency jurisdictions.

Land and resource management plans and activity plans must incorporate fire as a tool to achieve resource management objectives and consider the impacts of fire exclusion.

All areas subject to wildland fires must be covered by an approved Fire Management Plan, developed with the full participation of all partners, which will describe fire management goals and objectives and present a range of options for dealing with fires when they occur.

► Working with our partners is a key part of fire policy implementation, whether we're working on Fire Management Plans, Fire Protection Agreements, prescribed fire, prevention, education, preparedness or severity planning, training, qualifications, equipment, or any other aspect of fire management. We must place more emphasis on communicating and working with our neighbors, cooperators, and partners.

► More emphasis will be placed on properly planning and conducting prescribed fire projects. This includes working with partners to assess the need for prescribed fire, the probability of success or failure, and the potential positive and negative consequences. And Agency Administrators and managers must support employees who implement a properly planned and conducted prescribed fire program, even if there are unplanned results.

► Everyone has an obligation to participate in and support the fire management program in whatever way they can. Trained, certified employees will participate in the wildland fire program, and others will provide support. Agency Administrators will be held accountable for results.

We can all help find innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of the fire policy review; the use of wildland fire crosses all functional boundaries. Every person has skills and experience that can contribute to its success.





*Draft press release to be used as is or localized as appropriate.*

## **Land Management Agencies Implement Federal Fire Policy**

Federal land and resource management agencies are gradually shifting the emphasis of their wildland fire management programs, based on the findings and recommendations of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review. Agencies include the USDA Forest Service and four Department of the Interior agencies: the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

A final report was issued in December 1995 following a year of intense study by an interdepartmental team of specialists, including fire ecology and management experts. According to Les Rosenkrance, Director of Fire and Aviation for the Bureau of Land Management, this landmark document incorporates the wisdom and experience of the past, reflects today's values, and prepares agencies to meet land management challenges of the future.

"First and foremost, the report reconfirms that public and firefighter safety is the top priority," Rosenkrance said. "It focuses on a wide variety of environmental and operational issues that ultimately contribute to human safety in a wildfire situation."

The report also places property and resource values on the same level, as the second priority. "This gives managers more flexibility," said Rosenkrance, "to make better decisions based on values to be protected." Previous policies put property values ahead of resource values in all situations.

Throughout the report, major emphasis is placed on returning fire to the ecosystem – allowing it to function, as nearly as possible, in its natural role and using it to achieve goals of ecosystem health. "Over the past century, we have not allowed fire to play its natural role in the environment," Rosenkrance explained. "Now heavy accumulations of dead trees, brush, and other vegetation are causing fires to move more rapidly and burn more intensely. The challenge of managing wildland fire in the United States has rapidly become more complex."

According to Dr. Mary Jo Lavin, Director of Fire and Aviation for the USDA Forest Service, Wildland/urban interface protection is also a major focus of the report. "It places more emphasis on developing and updating Fire Protection Agreements to accurately reflect federal responsibility," she said. The report defines the federal responsibility as fighting wildland fires; reducing fuel





hazards (dead and dying trees, shrubs, and grasses) on public lands adjacent to residential areas; and providing prevention, education, and technical assistance to state, local, and private entities. Lavin said the report further clarifies that structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of others – in some cases, Tribes, states, and local governments.

The review designates the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving state agencies, as well as local and private interests, in the wildland/urban interface. It also recommends using the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes Federal and State cooperators, as a forum for focusing on wildland/urban interface issues.

"While the wildland fire program has always changed and evolved in response to current needs," Rosenkrance said, "the recommendations in this report create a solid framework for enhancing cooperation among land management agencies as they continue to work together toward the same goals, using consistent, compatible processes."

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman accepted the team's report in December and released it publicly in February 1996. A top-level interagency management oversight team will direct the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.





# Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

## Fact Sheet

### Background

1. The review was chartered on December 30, 1994, by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and conducted jointly by both Departments.
2. Principal agencies involved in the review were the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Others who participated were the National Biological Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. The review was prompted by several factors, including:
  - The severity of the 1994 fire season, which resulted in increased awareness and concern about the dangers of wildfire and the natural role of wildland fire among natural resource agencies and the public.
  - The outcome of an October 4, 1994, House Agriculture and Natural Resources hearing that established a national commitment by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to address wildland fire issues.
  - Recommendations from the October 17, 1994, Report of the South Canyon Interagency Management Review Team that issues of preparedness, fuels management, and wildland/urban interface fire protection be examined.
  - An August 1994 request by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Cabinet Affairs for a nationwide review of wildland fire issues.
  - Internal concerns stemming from the increasing magnitude and severity of wildland fires and issues revolving around the use of wildland fire to restore forest and rangeland health.
4. Employees and the public were invited to comment during the scoping process in January 1995 and again when the draft report was released in June 1995. Comments were used in formulating the December 18, 1995, final report.
5. The findings and recommendations were accepted and endorsed by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt in December 1995. The report was released publicly on February 14, 1996.





## What the Report Says - Key Points

1. Reaffirms that firefighter and public safety is #1 priority.
2. Requires that fire management goals and objectives be set forth in land and resource management plans and that fire occurrence be considered as a tool in achieving resource management objectives.
3. Focuses on the use of wildland fire to maintain/enhance resources by allowing it to function in its natural role.
4. Defines wildland fire as a critical natural process, not necessarily as a wildfire (bad) or a prescribed fire (good).
5. Directs agencies to jointly develop programs to expand the use of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems.
6. Encourages an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned and conducted prescribed fire program, even when projects may have unfavorable outcomes.
7. Emphasizes hazard reduction to improve the health of the land and to prevent large-scale, high-intensity fires.
8. Requires that Fire Management Plans be developed for every acre with burnable vegetation and that those plans be closely linked to land and resource management plans and include the full range of fire management actions.
9. Requires that any action on a wildland fire be based upon direction in the Fire Management Plan.
10. Gives managers the flexibility to make better decisions about the negative and positive impacts of wildland fire and to choose from the full spectrum of fire management actions available.
11. Shifts preparedness emphasis to include ensuring the capability is in place to support land and resource management plans rather than focusing primarily on fire suppression and protection.
12. Reinforces that fire suppression actions must be conducted with a high regard for firefighter and public safety and consistent with resource objectives.
13. Clarifies that trained, certified employees will participate in the fire management program, others will provide support, and administrators will be held accountable.
14. Adjusts protection priorities from a strict (1) human life (2) property (3) resource values to (1) human life and (2) property and natural resources, providing the flexibility for managers to set priorities based on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources.
15. Broadens the emphasis of interagency cooperation to all aspects of the fire program – planning, preparedness, suppression, use, monitoring, research, prevention, etc., rather than focusing primarily on protection.





16. Requires that economic efficiency considerations include commodity, non-commodity, and social values.
17. Clarifies that the Federal government is a partner in wildland/urban interface issues, including firefighting, fuels reduction, education, and technical assistance, and that structural fire protection is generally the responsibility of others, including Tribal, State, and local governments. Requires that all wildland/urban interface areas be covered by Fire Protection Agreements that define responsibilities.
18. Utilizes the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, in the wildland/urban interface; recommends using the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes Federal and State cooperators, as a forum for focusing on wildland/urban interface issues.
19. Emphasizes continued cooperation with partners to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire.
20. Places more emphasis on forming partnerships and otherwise informing, involving, and working with others – employees; Federal, Tribal, State, and local partners; cooperators; homeowners; private entities; and the public – in all aspects of wildland fire management.
21. Sets the stage for eliminating administrative barriers in the areas of funding, hiring, training, accountability, data collection and reporting, and resource and fire management planning.
22. Directs Federal agencies to establish fire management qualification standards for agency administrator, fire program manager, and other fire management positions and to staff those positions with individuals who are qualified and committed to accomplishing the total fire management program. Further directs that job performance standards be developed that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities and that agency administrators and fire program managers be held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction.

## Implementation

1. In December 1995, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture endorsed the principles, policies, and recommendations of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review. They directed that implementation be based on the following criteria:
  - Ensure consistency with the nine Guiding Principles contained in the Report.
  - Implement on a joint, interagency basis wherever possible to ensure the consistent application of policy.
  - Involve a broad spectrum of program areas, including resource managers, agency administrators, scientists, and planners, as well as the wildland fire management staffs.
  - Address local interagency integrated planning as a critical means of ensuring that on-the-ground implementation is as effective as possible.
  - Coordinate with other Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense.





- Ensure coordination with Tribal, State, and local partners.
  - Recognize the results of the wildland/urban interface project sponsored by the Western Governors' Association.
2. The four Interior agencies and the USDA's Forest Service established a Management Oversight Team (MOT) to oversee the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. That team consists of:
- Les Rosenkrance*, Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, Bureau of Land Management  
*Joan Comanor*, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service  
*Maureen Finnerty*, Associate Director, Park Operations and Education, National Park Service  
*Carolyn Bohan*, Deputy Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service  
*Terry Virden*, Acting Director, Trust Responsibilities, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
*Dennis Fenn*, Deputy Director, National Biological Service  
*Donald Artley*, State Forester, Montana Department of State Lands  
*Bill Leenhouts*, Executive Secretary
3. An Implementation Action Plan was finalized on May 23, 1996, with input from field-level line officers and fire program managers. The plan divides action items into three categories:
- a. Action Items to be Implemented Immediately at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Level - Federal agencies are ultimately responsible for implementing action items; however, there may be action items that adversely affect partners, such as State agencies, due to legal or budgetary constraints. Within each Geographic Area, federal agencies will develop an action plan, in coordination with local partners, that sets a course for implementation at the local level.
  - b. Action Items That Will Require a Long-Term Commitment - These action items may be partially implemented, but further work is required for complete implementation. Some action items are dependent on others being completed, and others will require long-term agency commitment of funding and FTE. In some cases, two or three specialists will be assigned responsibility; in others, larger task groups will be asked to do further analysis and develop actions. These assignments are outlined in the Implementation Action Plan.
  - c. Action Items That Relate to the Interagency Management Review Team (IMRT) - Seven action items will be handled as part of IMRT completion. Six will be combined with IMRT action item 3.6 and one with item 3.7.
4. Wildland/urban interface protection and land management planning are two major components of the implementation effort.
- a. Wildland/urban interface issues have existed for many years, and they will not be solved overnight or by any one entity. However, the recommendations in the report open up some new opportunities.
  - b. It will be important for agencies to work together to make their land and resource management processes compatible and to include in those plans fire management objectives that cross agency jurisdictions.





5. No time frame has been established for full implementation of the more than 80 actions contained in the report; it will be a long-term, ongoing process. While some involve one-time corrections, others involve attitudes and beliefs that must evolve over time and will require continued vigilance.
6. Successful implementation will require the full support and involvement of employees at all levels.
  - a. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups must ensure that implementation is a coordinated effort and there is mutual understanding and ownership among all partners.
  - b. Agency Administrators must be involved in the development of implementation strategies and plans in order to contribute their support, provide reality checks, and develop ownership. They must institutionalize the action items into agency operations.
  - c. Field-level employees are responsible for following through on the ground.





# Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

## Q&A's

### 1. *Q: What prompted the review?*

A: Several factors, including:

- The severity of the 1994 fire season that resulted in increased awareness and concern about the dangers of wildland fire and the natural role of wildland fire among land and resource management agencies and the public.
- Outcome of an October 4, 1994, House Agriculture and Natural Resources hearing that established a national commitment by USDA and USDI to address wildland fire issues.
- Recommendations from the October 17, 1994, Report of the Interagency Management Review Team in the wake of the South Canyon Fire Investigation that issues of preparedness, fuels management, and wildland/urban fire protection be examined.
- An August 1994 request by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Cabinet Affairs for a nationwide review of wildland fire issues.
- Internal concerns stemming from the increasing magnitude and severity of wildland fires and issues revolving around the use of wildland fire to restore forest and rangeland health.

### 2. *Q: What agencies were involved in the review effort and in formulating the new joint policy?*

A: The review was jointly conducted by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of the Interior (USDI). Principal agencies from these two Departments included the Forest Service from USDA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Biological Service, and National Park Service from the USDI. Full partners in this interdepartmental and interagency review included the Environmental Protection Agency, National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration.





3. *Q: What issues are included in the review?*

A: The review focused on five major policy or program areas, including:

- 1) The role of wildland fire in natural resource management including appropriate strategies for using fire to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems and other societal benefits.
- 2) The deliberate use of wildland fire to meet a number of resource management objectives, from the reduction of fuel hazards (accumulations of flammable dead or living vegetation) to achieving specific responses from fire-dependent plant species, such as the regeneration of aspen.
- 3) Wildland fire protection preparedness and suppression issues such as safe firefighting practices, preparedness planning methods, protection priorities and capability.
- 4) The appropriate role of Federal, state, local, and private organizations in fire protection and management in the wildland/urban interface zone (the area where houses, cabins and other structures mix with the undeveloped wildland).
- 5) Broad coordinated program management issues such as accountability, efficiency, organizational alternatives, weather support, and data management.

4. *Q: When was the review initiated?*

A: The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior signed a joint charter establishing the review effort and designating the senior-level Steering Group on December 30, 1994. Work on the project was initiated early in 1995.

5. *Q: Was there any opportunity for public input?*

A: On January 3, 1995, the Steering Group asked for input from the public and employees to help identify issues that should be addressed by the review. This opportunity was announced externally by Federal Register Notice, press release, and letters to individuals and organizations who had expressed past interest in wildland fire issues. Internally employees were apprised of the process via memoranda, electronic bulletin board, and meetings.

Following the identification of issues, four core teams of subject-matter experts representing Federal, State, and local governments, as well as interest groups and private industry, prepared a draft report.

On June 22, 1995, a Draft Report was published in its entirety in the Federal Register. The report also received wide distribution through an external mailing list and to all agency field offices. The Steering Group asked the public and employees for comment on the draft recommendations contained in the report. In order to get the broadest possible input, the comment period, which initially ended on July 24, 1995, was reopened for an additional 45 days, closing on September 25, 1995.





6. *Q: What are some of the key components of the new Federal Wildland Fire Policy?*

A: The report provides one uniform overall policy under which Federal land management agencies will conduct wildland fire management operations. This will give agencies a stronger foundation upon which to communicate and collaborate with each other and to mutually explore new ways in which cooperation and program effectiveness may be improved. Some of the key components of the new policy include:

- \* Reaffirming firefighter and public safety -- human life -- as the #1 priority.
- \* Recognizing that wildland fire is neither "bad" nor "good" and that it must be allowed to play its appropriate natural role in the ecosystem.
- \* Requiring approved Fire Management Plans for every administrative unit with burnable vegetation, with such plans to address the full range of fire management actions.
- \* Requiring any action on a wildland fire to be based upon the direction in the Fire Management Plan.
- \* Expanding the emphasis of preparedness planning from fire suppression and protection to supporting land and resource management plans.
- \* Changing the rigid protection criteria from 1) life, 2) property, and 3) resource values to 1) life and 2) property and natural/cultural resources, providing administrators the flexibility to weigh the relative values to be protected.
- \* Clarifying that an adequate number of trained, certified employees will participate in the wildland fire program, that others will provide support, and that administrators will be held responsible/accountable for results.
- \* Clarifying that the Federal role in the wildland/urban interface is wildland firefighting, fuels reduction, education, and technical assistance and that structural protection is generally the responsibility of others – often Tribal, State, and local governments.
- \* Achieving consistency and compatibility in our approach to fire management across agency boundaries for the health of the land and the benefit of those who use the land.

These are just a few of the policy decisions. Each section of the report contains a set of goals and actions that are necessary to accomplish the guiding principles and policies laid out on pages 4 and 5 of the report.

7. *Q: How will the new policy affect existing agreements?*

A: Existing agreements will continue to remain in effect. As agreements expire or are renegotiated, they will be revised to be consistent with the nine Guiding Principles and the thirteen policy statements that are the foundation of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review report.





8. *Q: What was the Western Governors' Association (WGA) role in development of the new fire policy?*

A: Early in the process, public comment indicated the need for State, local, and private involvement in finding and implementing solutions to the escalating problem of fire protection in the wildland/urban interface. In response, the WGA initiated a separate process compatible with the Fire Policy Review to build national consensus and recognition of the significance of this problem and facilitate local partnerships to find and implement creative solutions. The WGA has been successful in bringing State Foresters and Fire Marshals, county officials, representatives from the Insurance Institute For Property Loss Reduction and other underwriters, the building trades industry, academia, members of the Federal government, and other interested groups together for the first time to seek national consensus on fire protection in the interface.

The WGA report will assist Federal agencies in moving forward with fire protection responsibilities in the wildland/urban interface.

9. *Q: How does the policy report affect the Federal role in protecting structures in the wildland/urban interface?*

A: The policy report is very specific on this issue. Structural fire protection is the responsibility of other entities – in many cases, Tribal, State, and local governments. The Federal operational role in these areas is wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, and cooperative prevention, education, and technical assistance. Federal agencies may assist with the exterior protection of structures when the respective responsibilities of all parties are defined by written agreement. Some agencies, including the National Park Service, have the responsibility to provide structural fire protection for their own facilities, however.

10. *Q: Are Indian trust lands affected by this new policy?*

A: Indian trust lands are recognized as private lands held in trust by the Federal government; Tribal governments possess a "nationhood" status and retain inherent powers of self government. Tribal governments were involved in each step of the public involvement process leading up to the final policy. The final policy report has been sent to each Tribal government for their information. They may choose to adopt the fire management policy and goals contained in the report to meet their individual needs. The policy report recognizes "Tribes" as important partners in the overall wildland fire management equation and continued involvement of Federal agencies with Tribal governments may be expected.

11. *Q: Are Department of Defense (DOD) lands affected by the policy?*

A: The DOD manages a significant amount of wildland. They have been apprised of the policy review effort throughout the process, and appropriate DOD staff have been briefed on specific aspects of the policy. They may choose to adopt those policies deemed appropriate for the lands they administer.





*12. Q: What effect will the new policy have on land, resource, and fire planning processes?*

A: The policy calls for wildland fire, as a critical natural process, to be integrated into land and resource management plans. For environmental and economic efficiencies, this is to occur on a broad landscape scale, across agency boundaries. Recommendations to integrate wildland fire into the planning process must be based upon the best available science. Planning decisions regarding wildland fire will consider the need to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources. New land or resource management plans and plan amendments will be consistent with this policy.

Area- or site-specific Fire Management Plans (FMPs) must be consistent with the overall wildland fire management direction contained in land and resource management plans. FMPs must also address firefighter safety, public safety, and public health. As these plans are revised or written they must be brought into conformance with the new policy. The rate at which all plans are brought into conformance will depend upon agency funding levels.

*13. Q: What is the basis for making the decision to use wildland fire to achieve resource management objectives?*

A: Decisions to use wildland fire to protect, maintain, and enhance resources must be based on an approved land or resource management plan that sets management objectives.

In those geographic areas where land or resource management plans identify a positive role for wildland fire, managers may choose from several options. This may include monitoring or taking less aggressive action to suppress a wildland fire or the management ignition of prescribed fire to meet predetermined management goals.

In those areas where fire would not meet management objectives or would be detrimental to the health of the land or where the risks outweigh the benefits, managers would take aggressive initial-attack action aimed at cost-effective suppression.

*14. Q: Does this new policy open the door to increased arson?*

A: No. Federal land managing agencies have never tolerated arson. The new policy strengthens this commitment. The report contains specific policy requiring federal agencies to work together with state and local governments, groups and individuals to prevent the unauthorized ignition of wildland fires. Lightning-caused or management-ignited prescribed fires must be consistent with land and resource management plans, Fire Management Plans, and human safety, public health, and other appropriate issues.

*15. Q: How much wildland fire use is anticipated?*

A: An estimate of the acreage on which wildland fire may be used to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems and reduce fuel hazards cannot be made at this time. This estimate would be available when areas that are suitable for wildland fire reintroduction have been identified and when future budget capability is known.





**16. Q: *How can the public get involved in the decisions to use wildland fire to maintain and improve the condition of wildlands?***

A: The public will be invited to participate in the land and resource management planning process where the goals and objectives for the appropriate role of wildland fire are set. This includes plan amendments. Also, the public will be invited to participate in the development of environmental assessments that deal with wildland fire activities.

**17. Q: *How will agency administrators and fire managers be held accountable for the wildland fire management program?***

A: Agencies will increase the experience and qualification requirements of agency administrators and fire management personnel through training, job details, and job performance guidelines to ensure they have the requisite skills. In addition, fire management job qualifications will be based upon program complexity and be staffed by agency administrators and fire management personnel who meet these qualifications.

In response, agencies will ensure accountability to manage a safe and efficient program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements will include items specifically related to safety, recognize and reward success, and provide disciplinary action for failure.

**18. Q: *How will recommendations in this report affect the safety of firefighters?***

A: The first guiding principle and first policy statement reinforce that firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity. By policy, all Fire Management Plans must reflect this commitment; and, once people have been committed to an incident or a prescribed fire, these resources become the highest value to be protected.

**19. Q: *What is fire's natural role in ecosystems and why do we need to be concerned about this?***

A: More than a century of fire exclusion, combined with past land-use practices, have altered the landscape. This has resulted in changes such as a heavy build-up of dead vegetation, dense stands of trees, a shift to species that have not evolved and adapted to fire, and, in some cases, even an increase in non-native fire-prone plants. Because of these conditions, today's fires tend to be larger, burn hotter, and spread farther and faster, making them more severe, more dangerous, and more costly in human, economic, and ecologic terms.

The goal of the fire policy is to restore the natural balance by adopting land management practices that integrate fire into ecosystems as an essential natural process. Fire can be used to reduce the build-up of dead and downed trees and curb insect and disease infestations, while releasing and recycling nutrients essential for the growth and reproduction of many plant species.





20. Q: *What other tools can Federal agencies use to reduce fuel hazards?*

A: Many areas need immediate treatment of both live and dead vegetation in order to prevent large, damaging, high-intensity fires. In addition to wildland fire, fuel treatment in these areas may be accomplished by mechanical, chemical, biological, and manual means. In some areas, fuel accumulations may be so heavy that use of wildland fire may not be practical. In these cases pretreatment of the area by another means may be necessary before wildland fire may be applied. A combination of methods may be necessary to cost-effectively reduce fuel hazards in order to achieve ecosystem health and resource benefits.

21. Q: *Who is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations are implemented consistently?*

A: An interagency Management Oversight Team was established to oversee the implementation. It includes top-level representatives from each of the five Federal land management agencies – the Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs – as well as the National Biological Service and the National Association of State Foresters. Agencies will be guided by an Implementation Action Plan dated May 23, 1996.

22. Q: *How long will it take to implement the recommendations?*

A: The time required for implementation will vary. Some items that help to clarify or enforce current policy or program operations may be dealt with very quickly. Others that are a significant departure from current operations may require extensive collaboration across agency lines and with our non-Federal partners and will take longer to implement or will be a long-term, ongoing process. While some actions are one-time corrections, others involve attitudes and beliefs that must evolve over time and will require continued vigilance.

23. Q: *What actions may be taken in response to the policy report this field season?*

A: Agency administrators will ensure that all training, preparedness planning, and fire management planning reflects a commitment to firefighter and public safety as the first priority. To the extent possible, preparedness planning and pre-season reviews of existing Fire Management Plans and agreements included an evaluation of compatibility with the guiding principles and policies reflected in the report. Where appropriate, fire as a critical natural process will be integrated into new land and resource management plans and into efforts to revise and maintain existing plans. In addition, the nine Guiding Principles that are the foundation of the Federal wildland fire management program will influence all wildland fire decisions.





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